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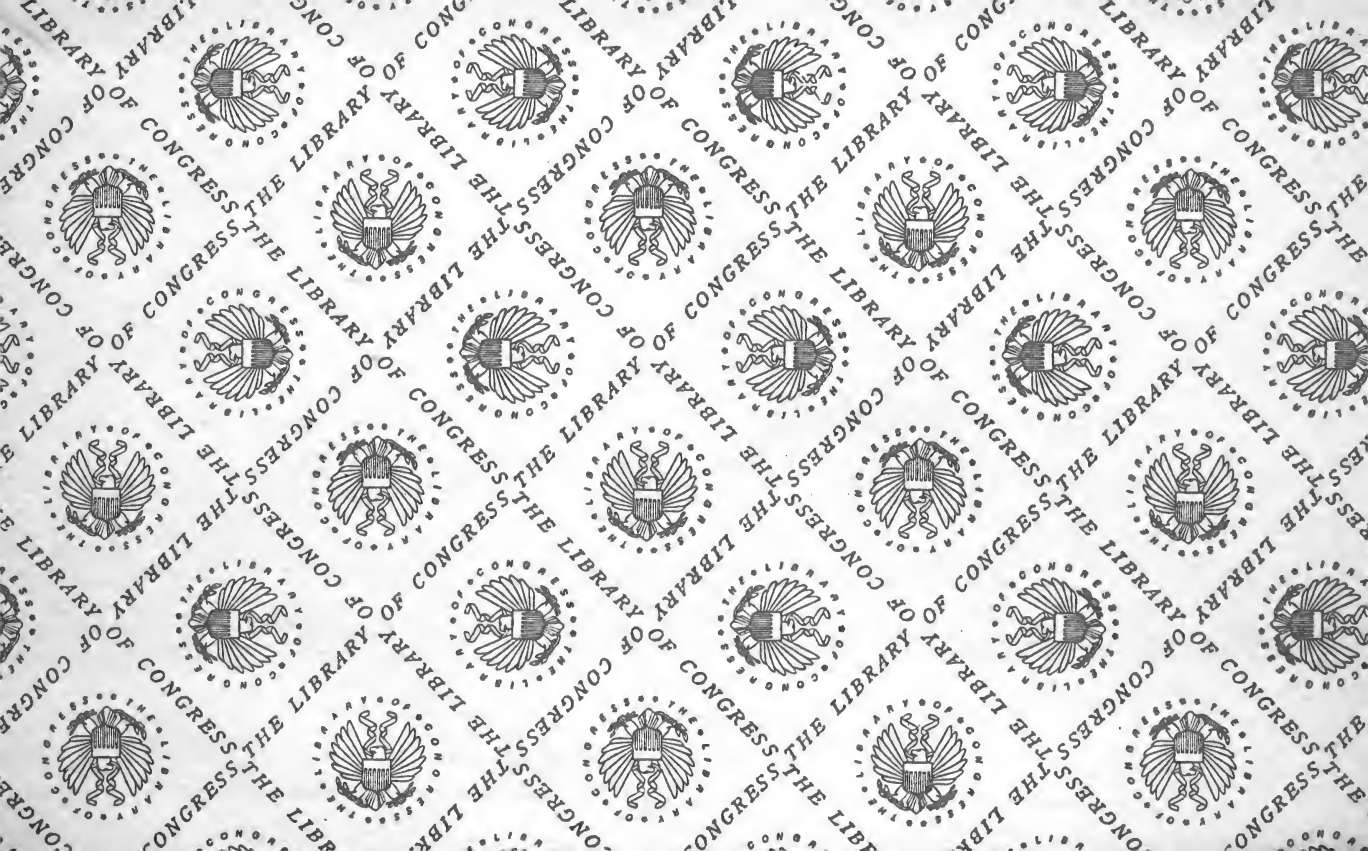
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PICTURES BY WILL VAWTER

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"Nobly he yokes
A smiling with a sigh,
As if the sigh
Was that it was
For not being such a smile."

CYMBELINE

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TO MY WIFE

CLARA

HER VOICE LIVES IN MY WORDS

HER HAND MOVES IN MY WORK

HER HEART THROBS IN MY THOUGHT

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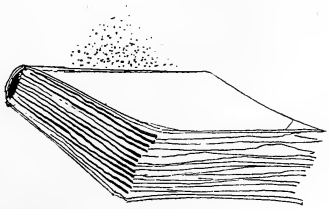
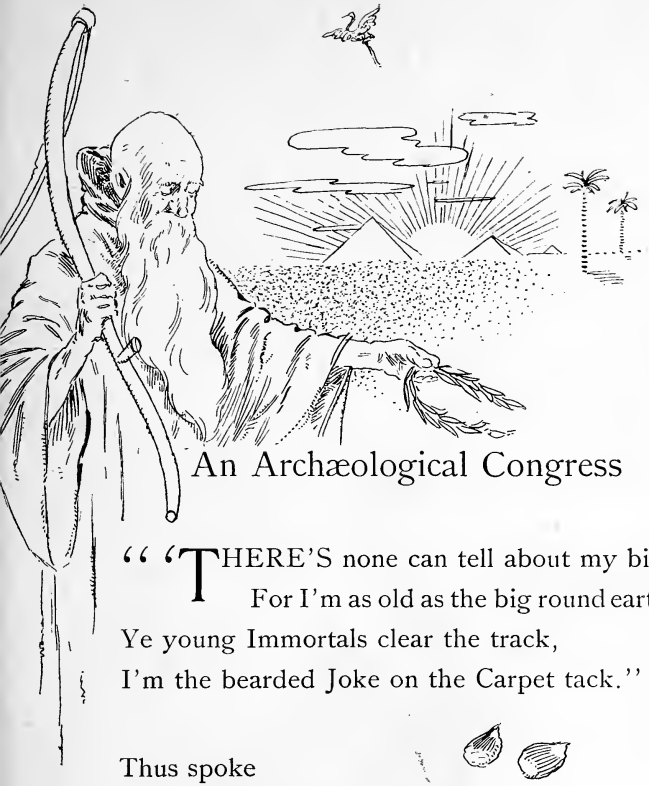




# An Archæological Congress

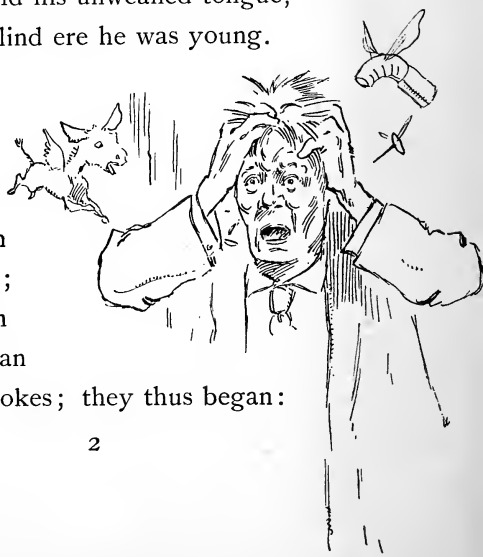
"'THERE'S none can tell about my birth
For I'm as old as the big round earth;
Ye young Immortals clear the track,
I'm the bearded Joke on the Carpet tack.''

Thus spoke
A Joke
With boastful croak;
And as he said,
Upon his head
He stood, and waited for the tread

## An Archæological Congress

Of thoughtless wight,
Who, in the night,
Gets up, arrayed in garments white,
And indiscreet,
With unshod feet,
Prowls round for something good to eat.

But other Jokes
His speech provokes;
And old, and bald, and lame, and gray,
With loftiest scorn they say him Nay;
And bid him hold his unweaned tongue,
For they were blind ere he was young.
So hot
They grew,
This complot
Crew,
They laid a plan
To catch a Man;
That all the clan
Might then trepan
His skull with Jokes; they thus began:



## An Archæological Congress

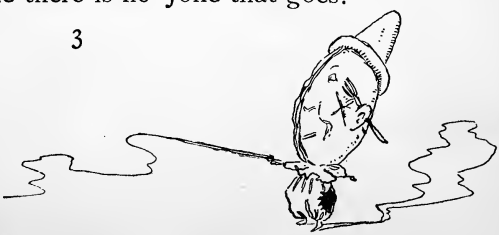
First Mule, his heel its skill to try,
Amid his ribs like lightning laid—
And back recoiled—he well knew why;
"Insurance Man," he faintly sayed.

Next Stove Pipe rushed, as hot as fire,
"Put up!" he cried, in accents bold;
With Elbow joint he struck the lyre,
And knocked the Weather Prophet cold.

But thou, Ice Cream, with hair so gray,
Three thousand years before the Flood,
Cold, bitter cold, will be the day
Thou dost not warm the Jester's blood.
"Spoons for the spooney," was her ancient song,
That with slow measure dragged its deathless length along.

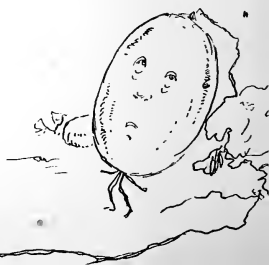
And longer had she sung, but with a frown,
Old Pie, impatient, rose
And roared, "Behold, I am the Funny Clown!
And without me there is no Joke that goes.





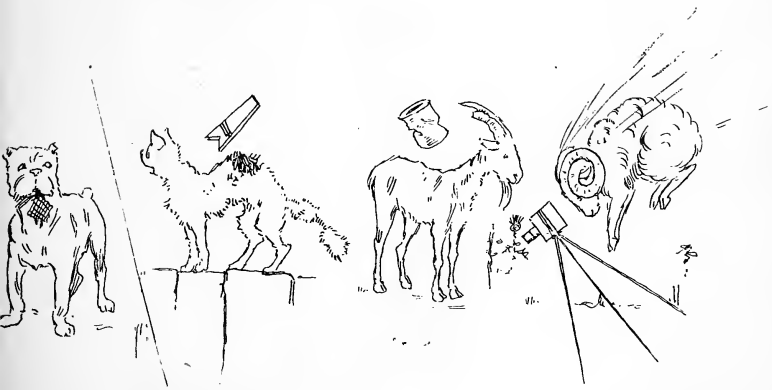
To every Jester in the land,
I lend my omnipresent hand;
I've filled in Jokes of every grade
Since ever Jokes and Pies were made;
Sewed, pegged and pasted, glued or cast,
If not the first of Jokes, I'll be the last."

With heart unripe and mottled hide,
Pale summer watermeloncholly sighed,
And—but the Muse would find it vain
To give a list of all the train;
The hairless, purblind, toothless crew,
That burst on Man's astonished view—
The Bull dog and the Garden gate;
The Girl's Papa in wrathful state;
Ma'ma in law; the Leathern Clam;
The Woodshed Cat; the Rampant Ram;
The Fly, the Goat, the Skating Rink,
The Paste-brush plunging in the Ink;
The Baby wailing in the Dark;
The Songs they sang upon the Ark;



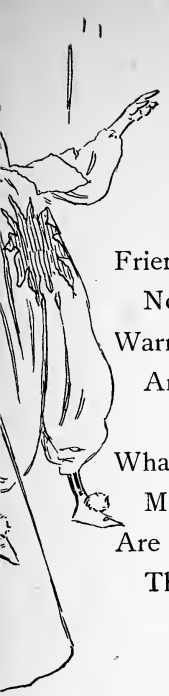
## An Archæological Congress

Things that were old when Earth was new,
And as they lived still old and older grew,
And as these Jokes about him cried,
And all their Ancient Arts upon him tried,
Their hapless victim, Man, lay down and died.



## The Funny Old Clown

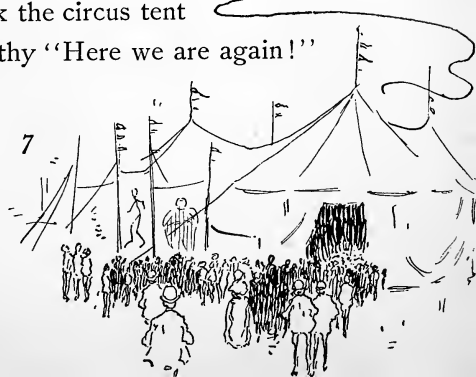
DEAR Century Plant, I love thy bismuthed face,
Thy peaked hat, thy grotesque painted smiles,
Thy hoary jokes that with an antique grace
Make plaintive music for thy antic wiles;
I love thy squalling songs, roared out of tune,
Thy bearded, old conundrums bald and blind—
The mellow beauty of the afternoon
That years untold through all thy wit hath shined.

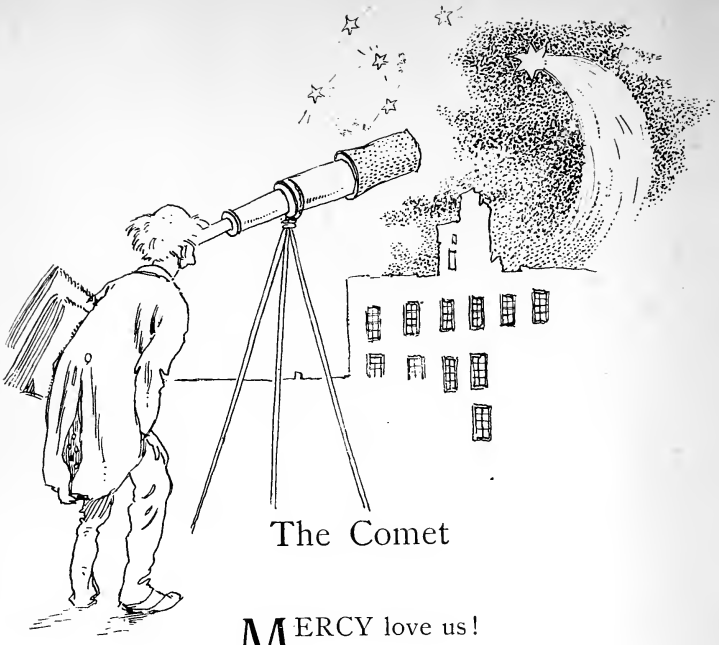


## The Funny Old Clown

Friend of my childhood, thou art never old;
No heart hath he who says thy wit is stale;
Warm is the soul that loves the jest thrice told,
And dear the friend who loves the twice-told tale.
What though the title page tells all the rest?
Must all our mirth be shiny with veneer?
Are not the oldest songs of all the best?
The oldest friends of all dear friends most dear?

What then? The little ones are pleased with thee,
And in their childish plaudits, sweet and clear,
The old, dead laughter of my boyish glee,
Once more called back to life, again I hear.
I laugh, with echoes of old laughter blent,
To think how new and bright thy jokes were then,
So, every year, I seek the circus tent
And shout to hear thy "Here we are again!"





## The Comet

MERCY love us!
Far above us
See the comet sloshin' round.
Fifty million
Billion trillion
Thousand miles above the ground.

With a tail
Like a whale,
See it scoot and whiz and rare!
With its flipper
In the "Dipper,"
How it riles the Major "Bear"!

## The Comet

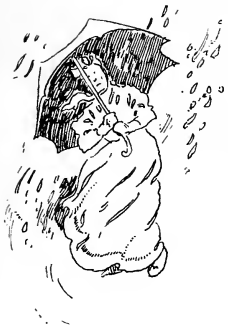
Now it's tryin'
For O'Ryan,
Irish chap that killed the bull;
And the moon
Pretty soon
Gives the comet's tail a pull.

Here and there,
Everywhere,
Restless sprite of sky idees.
Awful pert,
See it flirt
With the seven Pleiades.

Unbeliever,
Famine, fever,
Pestilence and plague and war,
Fret and worry,
Trouble, hurry—
That is what a comet's for!

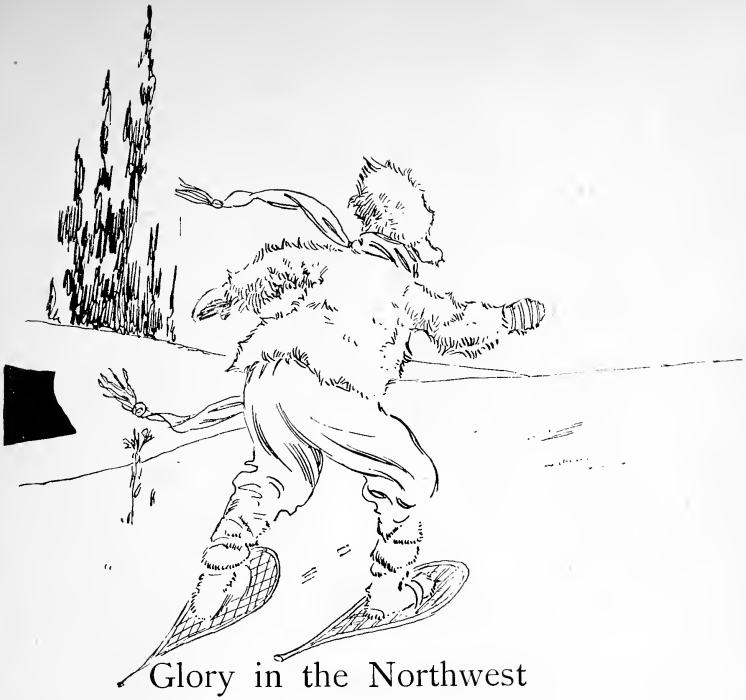
## The Comet

Lots of debt,
Too much wet,
Rain and hail and sleet and flood;
Burning drouth,
Torrid south,
Sun baked fields and seas of mud!



Blood and bones,
Tears and groans,
Gnashing teeth and horrid cries;
Howls and yowls,
Frowns and scowls,
That's about the comet's size.

It will bring
Everything
That is bad beneath the sun.
How it hums!
Here it comes!
Goodness gracious, let us run!



## Glory in the Northwest

FROM Shediac the Canadian
Marched out to look for the half-breed man;
And ere the month of May was gone
He roped him up in Saskatchewan.

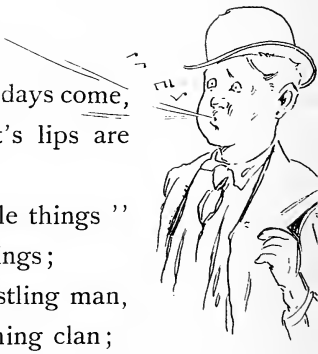
From Shubenacodie and Memrancook
His weary way the volunteer took;
From Passakeag and Bartibogue,
He marched away to corral the rogue.

## Glory in the Northwest

From Maguadavie and Stewiacke,
Assametaquaghan and Peticodiac;
From Rusiagonish and Ste. Flavie
Nauigewauk and Apohagui.

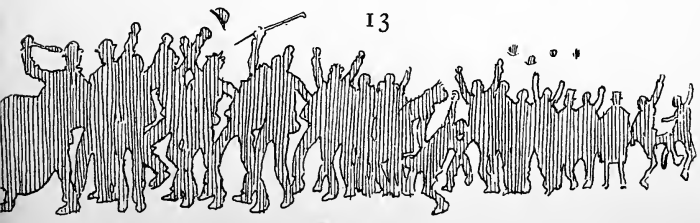
From several places that I can't spell,
And some that I can't pronounce as well,
They chased the half-breed over the plains
And knocked him out with their easiest names.

## Utopia



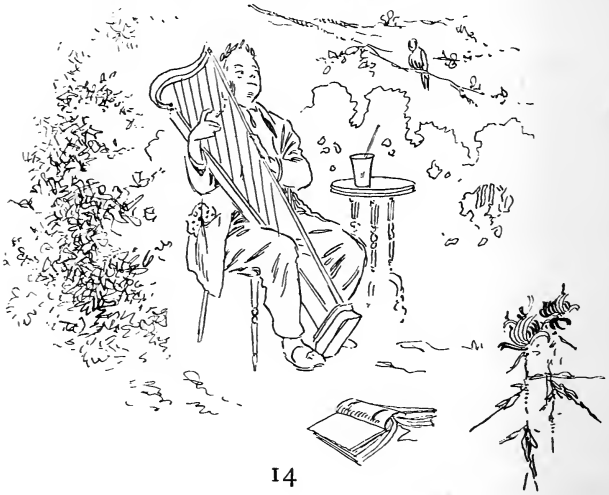
WHAT will we do when the good days come,
When the croaking prophet's lips are dumb?
When the man who reads us his "little things"
Has lost his voice with the dole it brings;
When stilled is the breath of the whistling man,
And the yells of the campaign marching clan;
When the neighbors' children have lost their drums—
Oh, what will we do when the good time comes?





## Utopia

Oh, what will we do in that good, blithe time
When the tramp will work—oh, thought sublime!
When the scornful dame with the weary feet
Will "thank you, sir," for the proffered seat;
When the man you hire to work by the day
Will let you do his work your way;
When the office boy will call you "Sir,"
Instead of "Soy," and "Governer;"
When the funny man is humorsome—
Oh, how can we stand the Millenium?

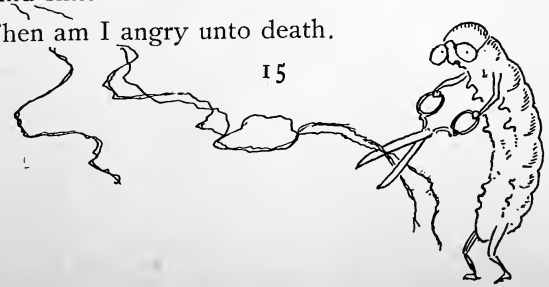


## The Plaint of Jonah

WHY should I live, when every day
The wicked prospers in his way,
And daily adds unto his hoard,
While cut worms smite the good man's gourd?

When I would rest beneath its shade
Comes the shrill-voiced book-selling maid,
And smites me with her tireless breath—
Then am I angry unto death.



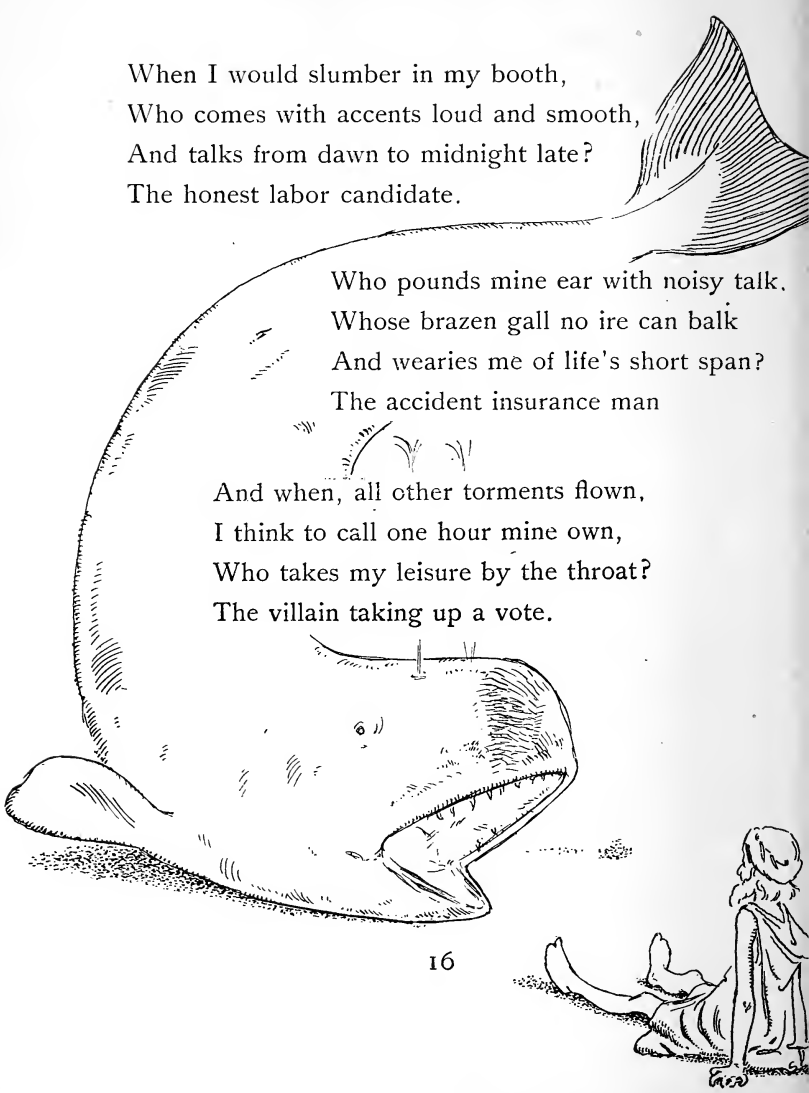


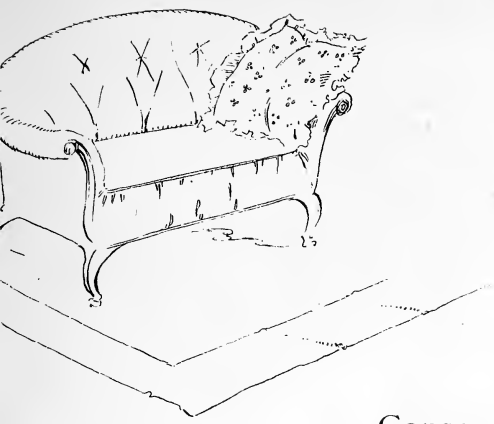
## The Plaint of Jonah

When I would slumber in my booth,
Who comes with accents loud and smooth,
And talks from dawn to midnight late?
The honest labor candidate.

Who pounds mine ear with noisy talk,
Whose brazen gall no ire can balk
And wearies me of life's short span?
The accident insurance man

And when, all other torments flown,
I think to call one hour mine own,
Who takes my leisure by the throat?
The villain taking up a vote.



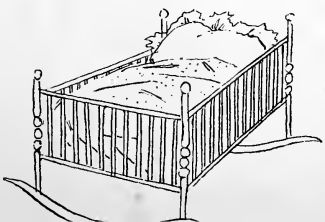


## Consequences

WHEN James came up one Sunday night
Aglow with love's soft flames,
He sought the sofa where she sat,
"So fa, so good," said James.

A year thrice told has come and gone
With joys and hopes and bother;
There stands a crib where the sofa did,—
Says James, "A little father."

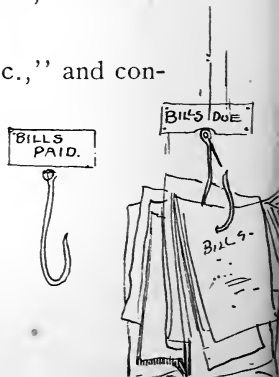




## Running the Weekly

IN the twilight in his sanctum sat the editor alone.
And his mighty brain was throbbing in a very lofty tone;
But he checked a deathless poem, that was fraught with fancies dim,
And he thought of Quill, his "e. c.," and contrived a pit for him.





## Running the Weekly

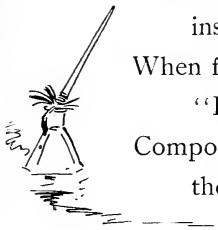
Then he stopped right in a leader on the European war,
While he wrote a puff for Barleycorn's new, family grocery store;
And just as he got started on the "Outlook of Today,"
The foreman came to say the "comps." had struck for higher pay.

Then he started on a funny sketch, a fancy bright and glad,
When Slabs, the undertaker, came to order out his "ad.";
He smiled and wrote the title, "The Reflections of a Sage,"
When the panting "devil" broke in with—
"They've pied the second page!"

He sighed, and took his scissors when the ever funny bore
Said, "Ah, writing editoria—" then he weltered in his gore.

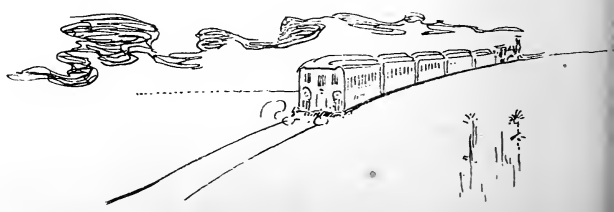
And as the scribe was feeling happy, writing up the fray,
His landlord came to know if he "could pay his rent today."

In deep abstraction then he plunged the paste brush in the ink,
And stammered, "Thank you, since you will—insist on it, I think—"
When from the business office came the cashier, "Here's a mess!
Composish & Roller's put a big attachment on the press."



Then broke the editorial heart; he sobbed, and and said "Good-bye!"
And forth he went, to some far land, from all his woes to fly.
But ere the second mile was flown he sank in wild despair—
The Wabash line took up his pass and made him pay his fare.



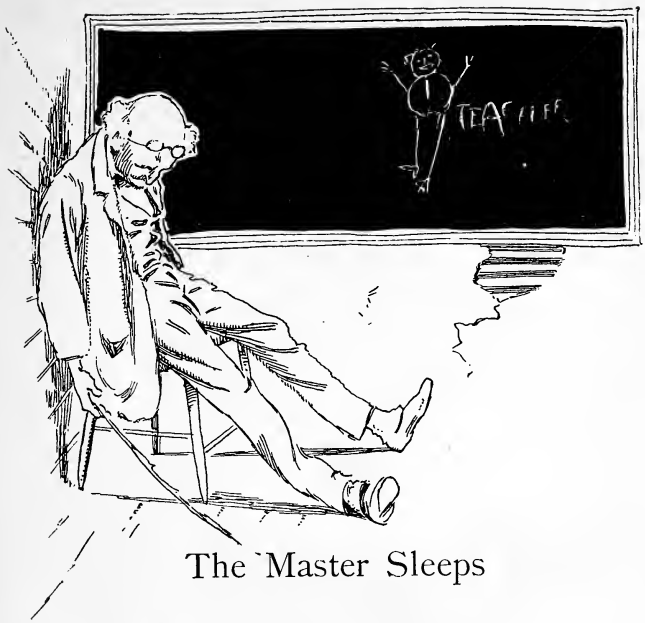


## Pulmonic Passion

PRESS me closer, all mine own––
Warms my heart for thee alone;
Each caress my longing fills,
Every sense responsive thrills;
'Neath thy touch I live, thy slave,
Rest the only boon I crave;
Thou dost reign upon my breast,
With thine own fierce ardor blest;
Closer still, for thou art mine;
Burns my heart, for I am thine!

## Pulmonic Passion

Thou the message, I the wire,
Thou the furnace, I the fire!
I the servant, thou the master—
Roaring,
Red Hot,
Mustard
Plaster!



## The Master Sleeps

THE breath of June with faint perfume
Comes stealing through the open door,
And restless shadows in the room
Play with the sunbeams on the floor.
The buzzing voices croon and drone
Or laugh aloud in willful way—
The old schoolmaster on his throne
Sleeps soundly on this sweet June day.

## The Master Sleeps

Away from noisy schools his dreams
Have borne him back through paths of light,
By dimpling mead and rippling streams
To childhood's home and morning bright.
Softly he sleeps, schoolmaster wise,
With one mild eye just on the crack,
So young Rob McIntyre he spies
And gars the dust fly from his back.

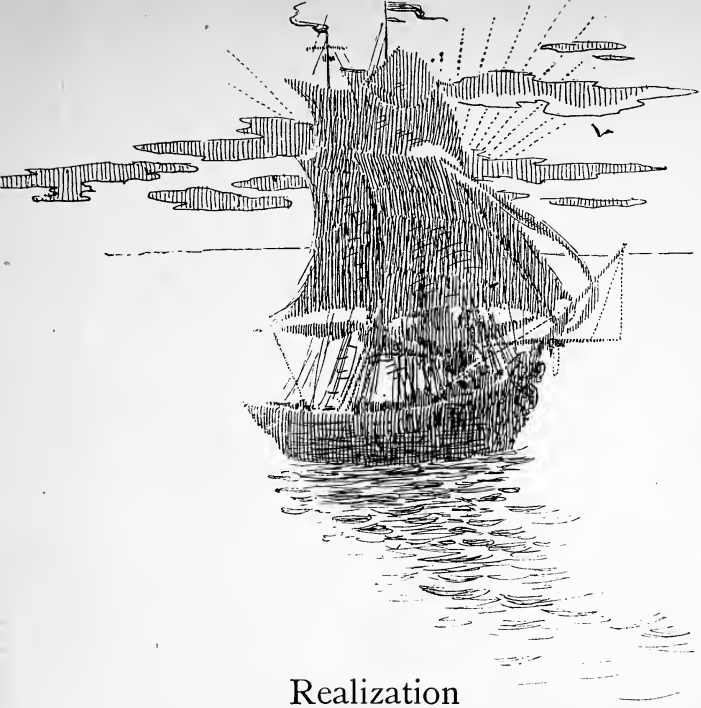
## Soldier, Rest!

A RUSSIAN sailed over the blue Black Sea,
Just when the war was growing hot,
And he shouted, "I'm Tjalikavakeree-
Karindabrolikanavandorot-
Schipkadirova-
Ivandiszstova-
Sanilik-
Danilik-
Varagobhot!"

## Soldier, Rest!

A Turk was standing upon the shore
Right where the terrible Russian crossed;
And he cried, "Bismillah!" I'm Abd el Kor-
Bazaroukilgonautoskobrosk-
Getzinpravadi-
Kilgekosladji-
Grivido-
Blivido-
Jenikodosk!"

So they stood like brave men, long and well,
And they called each other their proper names,
Till the lock-jaw seized them, and where they fell
They buried them both by the Irdosholames-
Kalatalustchuk-
Mischaribustchup-
Bulgari-
Dulgari-
Sagharimainz.

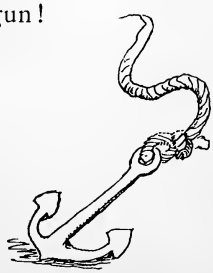


## Realization

'NEATH summer's sun and winter's blast
While the long years swept slowly past,
I waited, looking out to sea,
For sure my ship would come to me.

At last! For with this morning sun
My glad heart heard her signal gun!
And safe into the sheltering bay
I saw my ship come in to-day.





## Realization

And then I learned that she had been
Eleven weeks in quarantine,
While yellow fever sank the crew
Deep in its complementary blue.

And long before, while tempest tossed,
Her masts and rigging had been lost,
And then the crew, a frightened horde,
Had flung the cargo overboard.

And then a steamer of the line
Laid hold upon this ship of mine
And towed her through the waters wild,
And fearful claims for salvage filed.

Then next I learned the companee
Which had insured my ship for me
Had gone up, higher than a kite—
Over the stars—clear out of sight!

## Realization

So once again I sit all day
Down where the restless breakers play,
And wish—though all the good it does—
My ship had stayed out where it was.

And when the evening, gray and dim,
Falls on the ocean's misty brim,
With throbbing heart and quivering lip,
I wish I'd never had no ship.

## My First Cigar

'TWAS just behind the woodshed,
One glorious summer day,
Far o'er the hills the sinking sun
Pursued his westward way;
And in my safe seclusion
Removed from all the jar
And din of earth's confusion
I smoked my first cigar.

## My First Cigar

It was my first cigar!
It was the worst cigar!
Raw, green and dank, hide-bound and rank
It was my first cigar!

Ah, bright the boyish fancies
Wrapped in the smoke-wreaths blue;
My eyes grew dim, my head was light,
The woodshed round me flew!
Dark night closed in around me—
Black night, without a star—
Grim death methought had found me
And spoiled my first cigar.

It was my first cigar!
A six-for-five cigar!
No viler torch the air could scorch—
It was my first cigar!

All pallid was my beaded brow,
The reeling night was late,
My startled mother cried in fear,
"My child, what have you ate?"

## My First Cigar

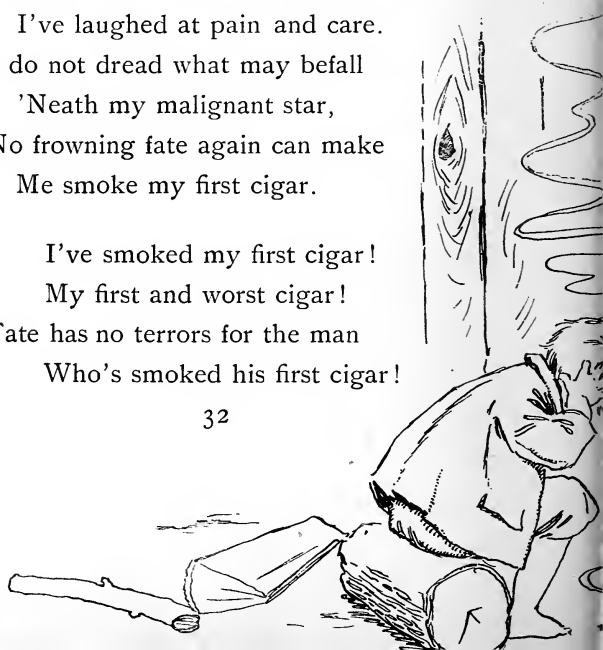
I heard my father's smothered laugh,
It seemed so strange and far,
I knew he knew I knew he knew
I'd smoked my first cigar!

It was my first cigar!
A give-away cigar!
I could not die—I knew not why—
It was my first cigar!

Since then I've stood in reckless ways,
I've dared what men can dare,
I've mocked at danger, walked with death,
I've laughed at pain and care.
I do not dread what may befall
'Neath my malignant star,
No frowning fate again can make
Me smoke my first cigar.

I've smoked my first cigar!
My first and worst cigar!
Fate has no terrors for the man
Who's smoked his first cigar!





## The Inside Track

HE came to the bower of her I love
Twanging his light guitar;
He called her in song his snow white dove,
His lily, his fair, bright star,
While I sat by the side of the brown-eyed maid
And helped her enjoy her serenade.

## The Inside Track

He sang that his love was beyond compare—
(His voice was sweet as his song);
He said she was pure, and gentle, and fair,
And I told her he wasn't far wrong.
I don't know whether he heard me or not,
For his E string snapped like a pistol shot.

He told how he loved her, o'er and o'er,
With passion in every word,
In songs that I never knew before—
And sweeter ones ne'er were heard.
But the night dews loosened his tenor strings
And they buzzed out of tune like crazy things.

He sang and he played till the moon was high,
(Oh, sweet was the love-born strain!)
While the night caught up each tremulous sigh
And echoed the sweet refrain.
But I laughed when a beetle flew down his throat
And choked in a sneeze his highest note.

## The Inside Track

She liked it; and I did—just so-so;
I was glad to hear his lay;
I sometimes echoed him, soft and low,
When he sang what I wanted to say;
Till at last I leaned from the window and then
I thanked him, and asked him to call again.
And then he went away.

## Baby Mine

THERE is no joy in the world like you,
No music sweet as your "goo-ah-goo,"
No skies so soft as your eyes of blue—
Baby, oh my baby!
But when you ground on the hidden pin,
And open your valve and howl like sin,
No gong can equal your little din,
Baby, oh my baby!

## Baby Mine

My heart is glad when your face I see,
My joy is full when you come to me,
I laugh with you in romping glee,
Baby, oh my baby!
But oftentimes my midnight snore
Is broken short by your startling roar,
And till morning dawns we walk the floor—
Baby, oh my baby!

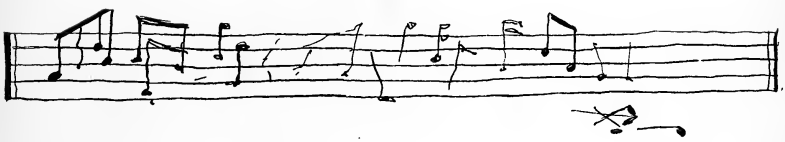
## Songs Without Words

I CAN not sing the old songs,
Though well I know the tune,
Familiar as a cradle song
With sleep-compelling croon;
Yet though I'm filled with music
As choirs of summer birds,
"I can not sing the old songs"—
I do not know the words.

## Songs Without Words

I start on "Hail Columbia,"
  And get to "heav'n-born band,"
And there I strike an up-grade
  With neither steam nor sand;
"Star Spangled Banner" downs me
  Right in my wildest screaming,
I start all right, but dumbly come
  To voiceless wreck at "streaming."

So, when I sing the old songs,
  Don't murmur or complain
If "Ti, diddy ah da, tum dum,"
  Should fill the sweetest strain.
I love "Tolly um dum di do,"
  And the "trilla-la yeep da"-birds,
But "I can not sing the old songs"—
  I do not know the words.



## Margins

MY dreams so fair that used to be,
The promises of youth's bright clime,
So changed, alas; come back to me
Sweet memories of that hopeful time
Before I learned, with doubt oppressed,
There are no birds in next year's nest.

## Margins

The seed I sowed in fragrant spring
The summer's sun to vivify
With his warm kisses, ripening
To golden harvest by and by,
Got caught by drought, like all the rest—
There are no birds in next year's nest.

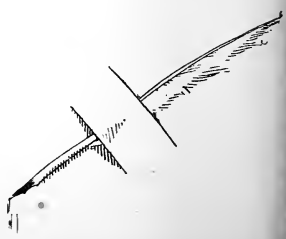
The stock I bought at eighty-nine,
Broke down next day to twenty-eight;
Some squatters jumped my silver mine,
My own convention smashed my slate;
No more in "futures" I'll invest—
There are no birds in next year's nest.

## The School Ma'am

SEE where she comes adown the lane
With gladness in her laughing eye,
But in her hand the rattan cane
To stifle laughter by and by.

Young love lurks in her merry tone,
And nestles in her roguish looks,
But long, hard, crooked questions moan
And sob and gibber in her books.



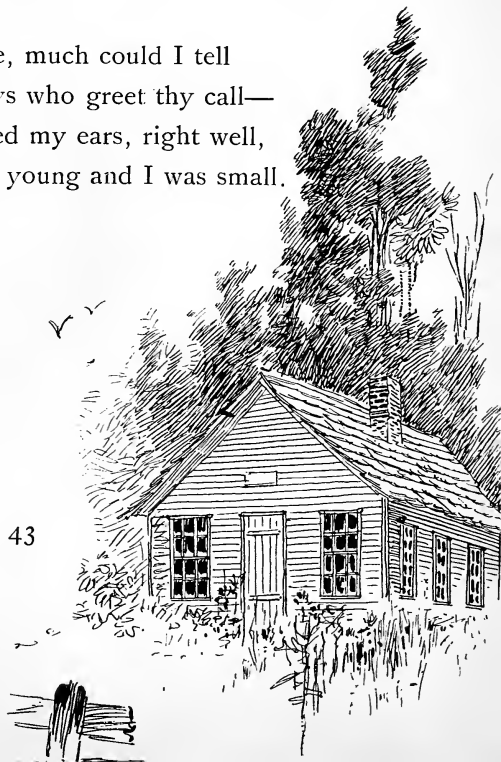


## The School Ma'am

Her dimpled hand, that seeks the curl
Coquetting with her graceful head,
Can make a boy's ears ring and whirl
And make him wish that he were dead.

How much she kens, this learned rose,
Of human will and human won't;
One wonder is, how much she knows,
The other is, how much I don't.

Sweet pedagogue, much could I tell
The merry boys who greet thy call—
Thy mother cuffed my ears, right well,
When she was young and I was small.



## Putting His Armor On

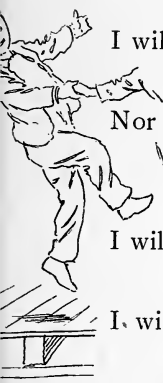
"IF you're waking call me early, call me early, mother dear,"
For I've a heap to resolute about, this glad New Year;
There's lots of things I'm going to say I'm going to try to do,
And I hope perhaps in a thousand things I'll manage to keep a few.

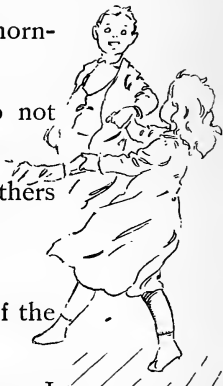
## Putting His Armor On

I will not look upon the wine when it is rosy red—
So may my evening hat sit loosely on my morning head,
I will not whistle in the cars the airs I do not know,
Nor hold high revel in my rooms while others sleep below.

I will not stand with sinners at the corner of the street;
I will not talk about myself, to every one I meet;
I'll be the good boy of the school, and study hard all day,
Nor prod my seat-mate with a pin, to see him laugh and play.

When Wisdom crieth in the streets, I'll know that she means me,
And when she putteth forth her voice, I'll answer, "Here I be!"





## Putting His Armor On

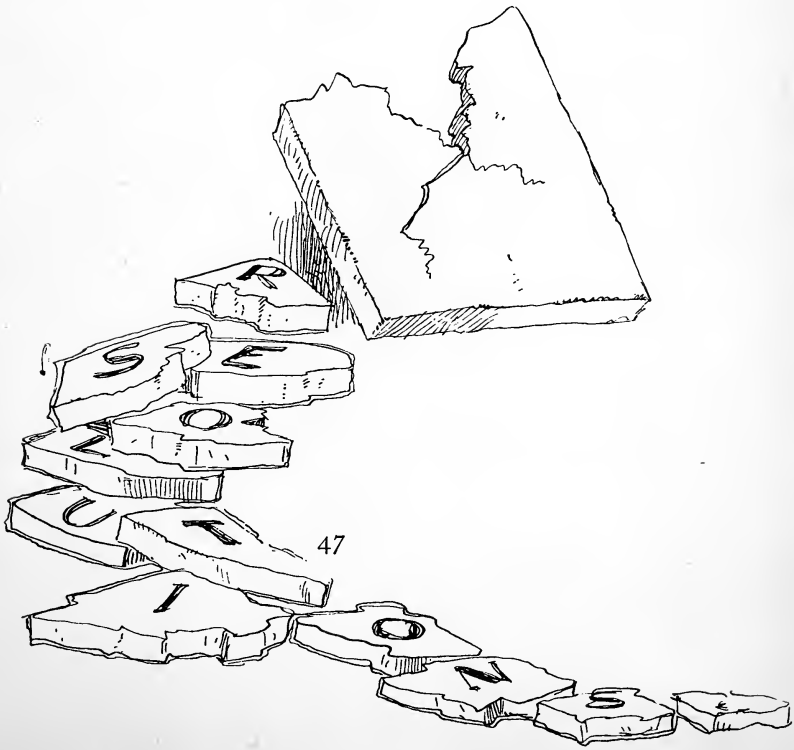
When bigger men affront me, I will give the
answer soft,
But the little man who tries it on, may venture
once too oft.

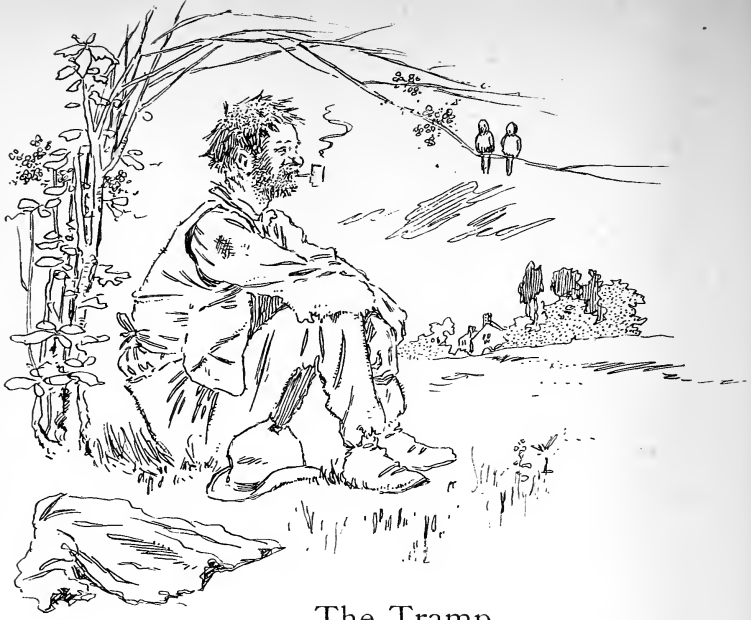
I will not lie about my age, my salary or weight;
To help in deed the friend in need, I will not
hesitate;
I will not grind—for nothing—the faces of the
poor,
And fractured toys and broken hearts I'll try to
mend and cure.

I will not wear a dress coat when the sun is in
the sky;
I will not wear a collar more than seven inches
high;
I'll be so good and sensible that people in the
street
Will lift their hats to me and make obeisance
when we meet.

## Putting His Armor On

Good-night, dear mother, sweet good-night;
nay, do not weep for me;
Though I'm so good to-night, you fear the
morn I ne'er may see;
But if I do live through it, when to-morrow dis-
appears—
You'll likely think your precious boy will live a
hundred years.





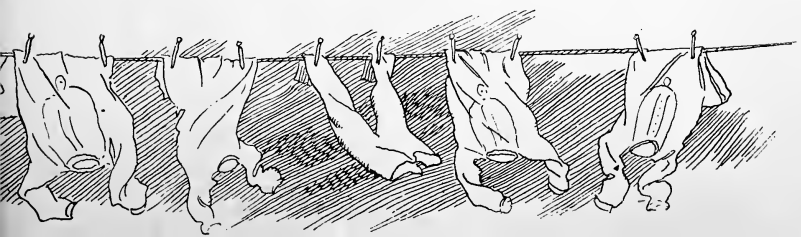
## The Tramp

SLOW paced, with listless step he moved along
To where the woodbine mantled all the door,
And strewed its restless shadows on the floor;
His sinewy breath, escaping in a song,
Bore scent of Old Tom Juniper, full strong;
Upon both feet he limped, as travel sore.
For alms he asked; ate them, and asked for more;
And lingered yet, the banquet to prolong,
Whiles I felt envy of his bone and brawn

And his glad life, so free from toil or care;
And did not know, till after he was gone
That he had taken with him, my best pair
Of Summer clothes, and other things, to pawn,
And drifted idly off—we knew not where.

Ah, would that I, like him, might come and go,
As birds, and winds, and shadows go and come,
Careless of all things sad or burdensome;
Living as lightly as fair lilies grow
Beside the dreamy river's slumbrous flow;
At morn, awakened by the hollow drum
Of partridge in the thicket; by the hum
Of ever busy bees at noon tide's glow
Lulled to my mid-day slumber in the wood;
Drone like, to eat the sweets by others stored,
To live with birds and winds in brotherhood;
My fashion plate—the clothes-line; and my board—
The farmer's care—but there! I am no good;
I have no art; I would get caught and scored!

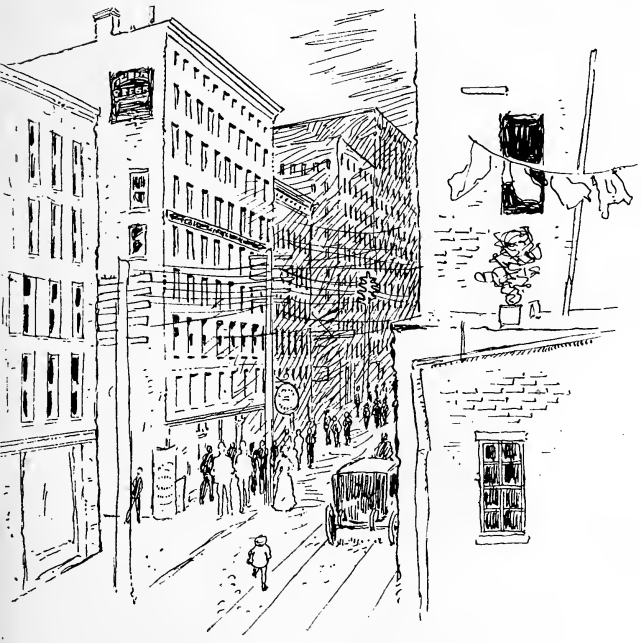


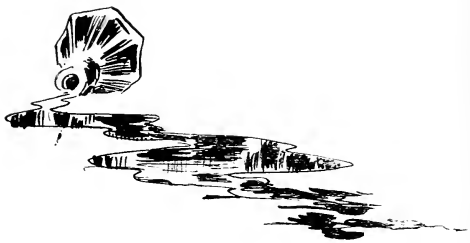


# City Lyrics

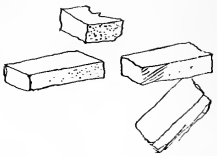
"What's in all this grand life an' high situation,
And nary pink nor hollyhawk bloomin' at the door?"

RILEY.





## The Hod-Fellow



OH, bird of the avenue, strong is thy wing
As thou piercest the clouds with thy loud caroling;
I follow thy flight with my hand-shaded eye—
"Oh, where art thou going, so high and so high?"

## The Hod-Fellow

Thy plumage is blue as the skies in the fall,
And tawny the top-knot that shines over-all;
Straight into the eye of the clear gleaming day,
Right upward and onward thou soarest away.

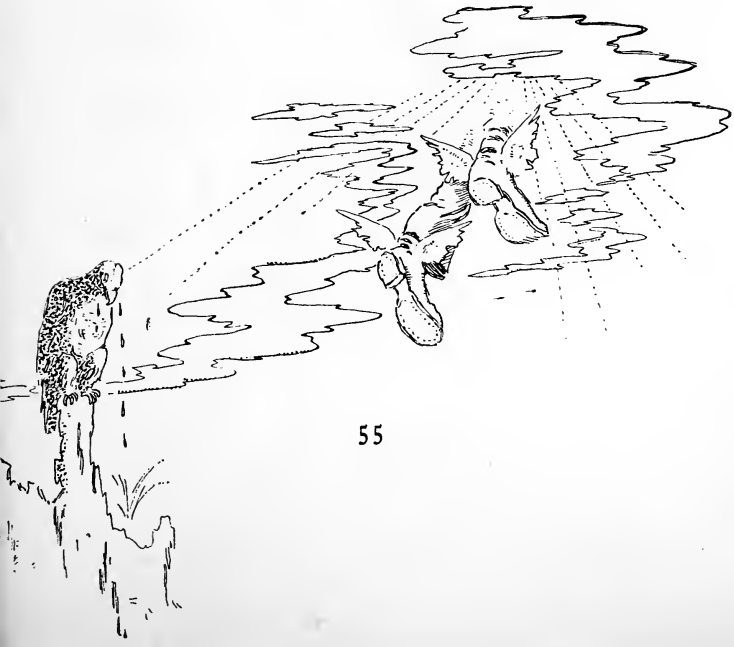
Say, where dost thou fly with thy head burden-bowed?
Oh, say, dost thou build thy lone nest in the cloud?
With an arm full of bricks in thy three-sided hat,
Thou wingest thy way to a ninth-story flat.

The flights thou hast made, were they straightly aligned,
Would pierce the blue ether and stick out behind;
Why not keep right on when the ladder you've trod,
And pull it up after you, man with the hod?

## The Hod-Fellow

The sun-staring eagle has broad-sweeping wings
To fan the light zephyr as upward he swings;
But he'd lower his crest in the gloom of defeat
Should he ever, like you, try to fly with his feet.

Oh, bird of the ladder-flight! Lightly my muse
Will sing the slow lift of thy high-soaring shoes;
Thou teachest ambition, the sure way to climb—
Is to plod up the ladder one round at a time.

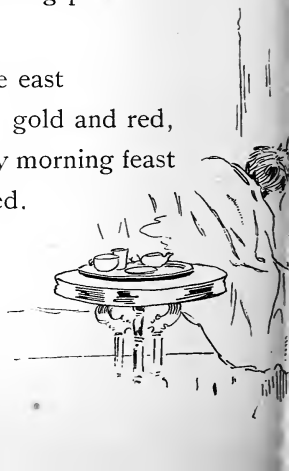


## Morning

WHAT charms are thine, oh incense-breathing morn!
How blessed with dewy freshness is the hour!
Before the dawn I hear the milkman's horn
Wind at my gate with ever-swelling power.

The rosy-fingered hours far in the east
Kindle the skies with flames of gold and red,
Food for the eyes—though for my morning feast
I much prefer a little roll in bed.





## Morning

The English sparrows wrangling at my gate
Salute the day with many a rasping squack;
The cartman, with slow wheels that creak and grate,
Inspires his laggard steed with shout and whack.

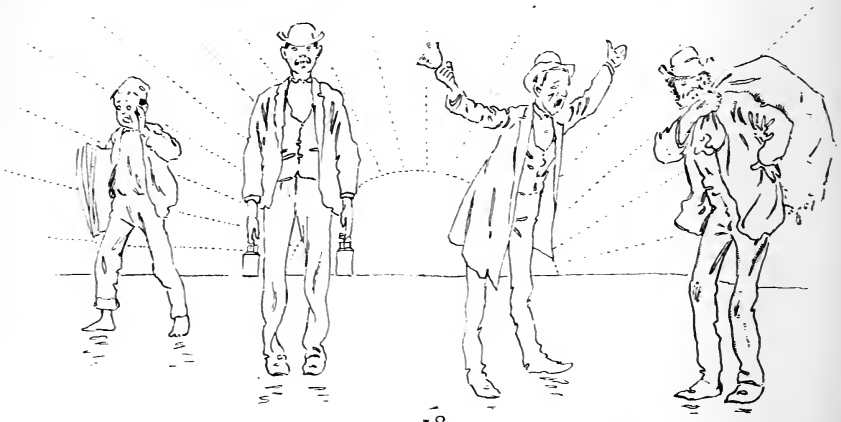
And now the baker's bell with dire alarm
Ding-dongs and clangs; in tones that fairly freeze
The list'ner's blood; a huckster from the farm
Yells 'neath the window—"Nice fresh radishees!"

With shrieks and cries of varying vehemence
Rush down the street loud swarms of whistling boys,
While every man in all the city dense
Starts up to greet the day with some new noise.

## Morning

"Old bot-tuls!" "Rags!" come bawling up the
street;
"Ould hats! ould hats! ould hats!" just
shakes the door;
"Charco'" and "Tatoes" in the tumult bleat,
While "Morning pa-piz!" swells the thunder-
ing roar.

Oh, peaceful morn; oh, hallowed, blessed dawn!
How sweet to kiss thy dewy, scented breath!
How sweet to grasp a club and fall upon
Yon shrilling boy, and maul him half to death!



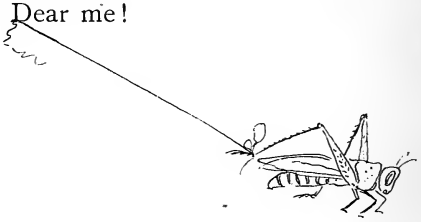
## School "Takes Up"

THE boys have come back to school
And me;
And a conflict of riot and rule
I see;
The whispered joke, and the stealthy grin,
The clinging wax, and the crooked pin,
The smothered laugh, and the buzzing din—
Ah me!

## School "Takes Up"

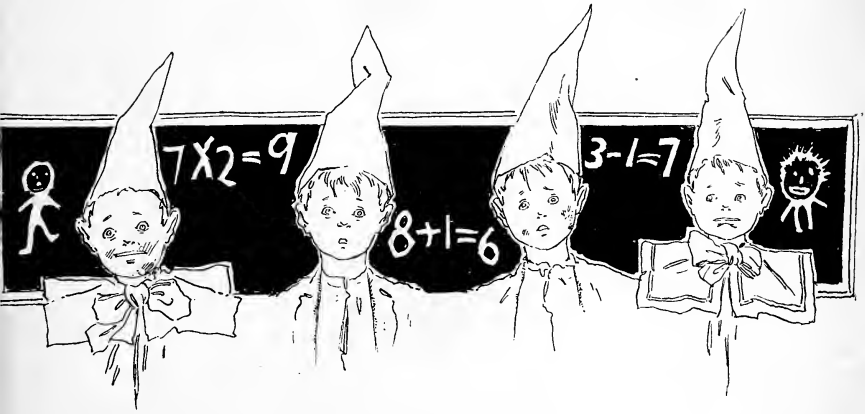
My profile chalked on the outer walls—
Dear me!
And the ceiling stuccoed with paper balls
I see;
The shuffling feet on the gritty floor,
The inky face at the school-room door,
The vicious pinch, and the muffled roar—
Ah me!

The question brisk and the answer slow—
Ah me;
The "I furgit" and the "I dun no,"
Ah me;
"'N' four times seven is twenty-nine;"
"'N' Rome is a town on the river Rhine;"
"'N' George is a verb, 'n' agrees with wine;"
Dear me!



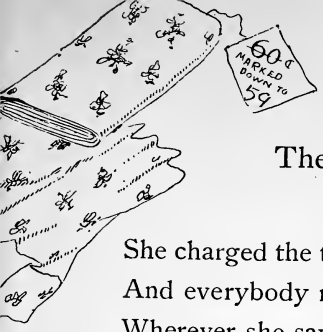
## School "Takes Up"

Grimace and giggle, grin and wink—
Dear me!
Buzz, hum and whisper—who can think?
Oh, me!
Wouldn't it be a better rule
To let the boy grow up a fool,
Rather than send him back to school
And me?



## The Countermarch

TRAMP, tramp, tramp!
With the morning clocks at ten,
She skimmed the street with footsteps fleet,
And jostled the timid men.
Tramp, tramp, tramp!
She entered the dry goods store,
And with hurrying tread the dance she led
All over the crowded floor.

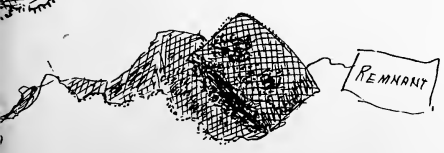



## The Countermarch

She charged the throng where the bargains were,
And everybody made way for her;
Wherever she saw a "special" sign
She made for the spot a prompt bee line;
Whatever was old, or whatever was new,
She had it down and she looked it through.
Whatever it was that caught her eye,
She'd handle, and price, and pretend to buy.
But 'twas either too bad, too common, too good,
So she did, and she wouldn't, and didn't and
would.

And round the counters and up the stairs,
In attic and basement and everywheres,
The salesmen fainted and cash boys dropped,
But still she shopped, and shopped, and shopped,
And shopped, and shopped, and shopped, and
shopped;
And round, and round, and round, and round,
Like a serpentine toy with a key that's wound,
She weaved and wriggled and twisted about,
Like a gyrating whirlwind dazed with doubt,
This way in and the other way out,





Till men grew giddy to see her go!
And by and by, when the sun was low,
Homeward she dragged her weary way
With a boy to carry the spoil of the day—
A spool of silk and a hank of thread—
Eight hours—ten cents—and a woman half dead.

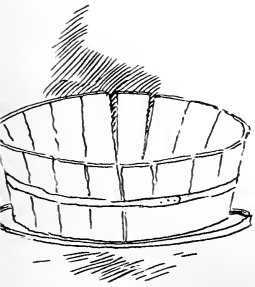
## The Mendicant

I HEAR thy full-voiced note—thy flight of song—
It broods beneath my casement in the night,
And cooing, wakes me in the early light,
Whiles I would slumber on, and on, and on,
And wonder if thou never wilt be gone.
I hear thy warble down the echoing street
Where other songs awake thine own to greet
And with it blend.

## The Mendicant

Down the long pavement's human-cumbered
waste,
I hear thy plaintive chant; thou hast, thou
sayst,
"Wash tubs to mend!"

Oh, child of song! my heart goes out to thee!
Although I would not, I must hear thee sing
Alike in winter sere and budding spring;
Far from thy madding wail though I should flee,
Yet, biding my return, thou still wouldst be
Singing the same old tune, the same old
words—
"Like the repeating minstrelsy of birds;"
Pray thee, suspend 'em!
In vain regrets thy voice no longer spend,
If it be true you have wash tubs to mend,
Why don't you mend 'em?



## "Festina Lente"

BLESSINGS on thee, little man.
Hasten slowly as you can;
Loiter nimbly on your tramp
With the ten-cent speedy stamp.
Thou art "boss"; the business man
Postals writes for thee to scan;
And the man who writes, "With speed,"
Gets it—in his mind—indeed.

## "Festina Lente"

Lo, the man who penned the note
Wasted ten cents when he wrote;
And the maid for it will wait
At the window, by the gate,
In the doorway, down the street,
List'ning for thy footsteps fleet.
But her cheek will flush and pale,
Till it comes next day by mail,
With thine own indorsement neat—
"No such number on the street."
Oh, if words could but destroy,
Thou wouldst perish, truthful boy!

Oh, for boyhood's easy way—
Messenger who sleeps all day,
Or, from rise to set of sun,
Reads "The Terror" on the run.
For your sport, the band goes by;
For your perch, the lamp post high;
For your pleasure, on the street
Dogs are fighting, drums are beat;

## "Festina Lente"

For your sake, the boyish fray,
Organ grinder, run-away;
Trucks for your convenience are;
For your ease, the bob-tail car;
Every time and every where
You're not wanted, you are there.
Dawdling, whistling, loit'ring scamp,
Seest thou this ten-cent stamp?
Stay thou not for book or toy—
Vamos! Fly! Skedaddle, boy!

## Two Rag Men

DRIFTS away the murky night
Dawns the morning's smoky light;
In the highway's busy hum
Ere I see, I hear him come;
Gutter, barrel, box he drags,
While his matins rise—"Old rags!"

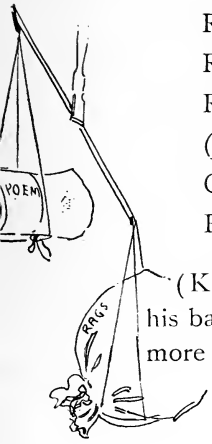
## Two Rag Men

Brother mine, thy wailing cry
Here I echo with a sigh;
All thy brother has to wear
When he fain would take the air,
Button gone, and pin that jags,
Ever mocks his poor "old rags."

E'en the page whereon I write,
Marring all its surface white,
Pure and fair as drifting snow
When December tempests blow—
Whispers to the pen that drags—
"I am nothing but old rags."

And the wealth I hope to get
For this intellectual sweat,
All the crisp and verdant bills,
Pulped and spread in paper mills,
All the poet's hard-earned swag,
Once was gathered in thy bag.

## Two Rag Men



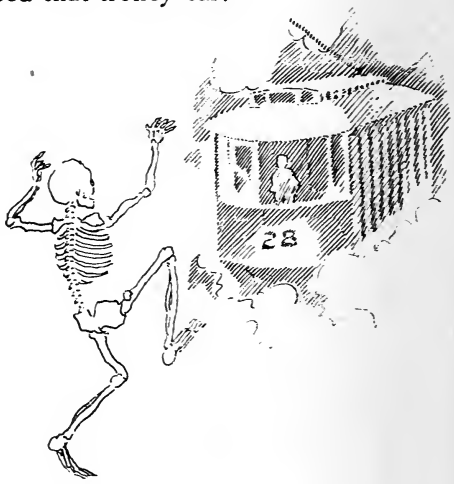

Rags, the bed on which I lie;
Rags, the shirt I have (to buy);
Rags, old rags, my note of hand
(So I'm given to understand);
Curses on thee, hook and bags,
Rival gatherer of rags!

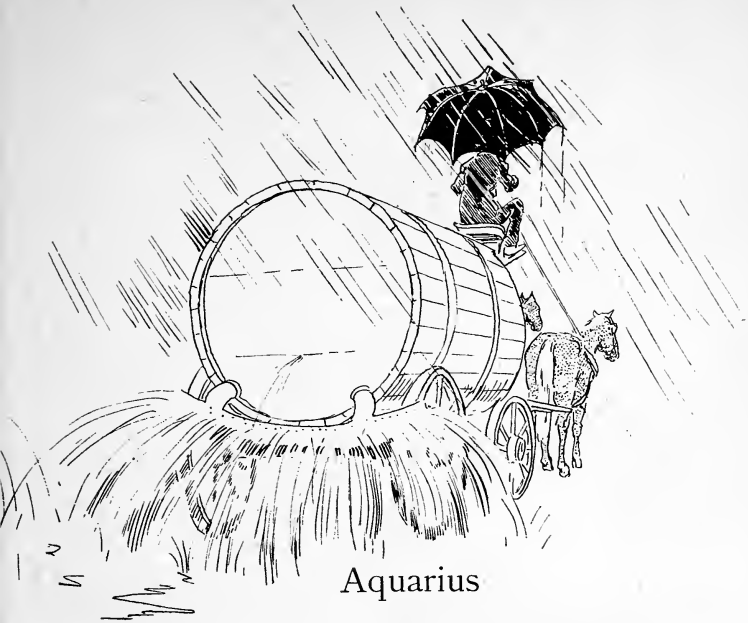
(Kills him with a stone ink bottle and steals his bag of rags, which brings at the junk shop more than a seven octave poem.)

## Trolley La La!

THE car he waited for came down,
And then went thund'ring by,
With winged feet along the street
He sped with fearsome cry;
The happy boys with joyous noise
Exclaimed "Hi, hi! Hooray!"
But swift and far that trolley car
He chased, that summer day.

And other cars they came and went—
Their gongs he heeded not;
His breath was gone, his strength was spent,
His frame and ire were hot;
With panting roar he passed his door,
And crooked, west and far,
Into the vague Hereaftermore—
He chased that trolley car.





## Aquarius

SPRINKLE, sprinkle, water-cart,
Oft I wonder where thou art;
Never can I find thee nigh
When the dust is deep and dry.

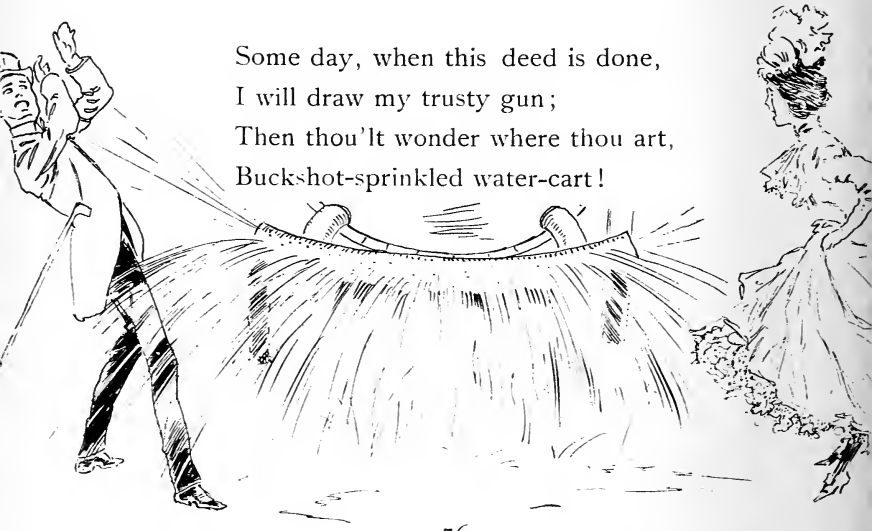
When the sun puts on his cloud
And the rain-pour patters loud,
Then you wing your little flight—
Sprinkle, sprinkle left and right.

## Aquarius

When the crossings, Sunday clean,
Full of well-dressed folk are seen,
Vainly then they dodge and scream,
Sprinkled with thy pluvial stream!

And when bright my shoes are "shined,"
And my hands in gloves confined,
Rattling down the thirsty street,
How you soak my hands and feet.

Some day, when this deed is done,
I will draw my trusty gun;
Then thou'lt wonder where thou art,
Buckshot-sprinkled water-cart!

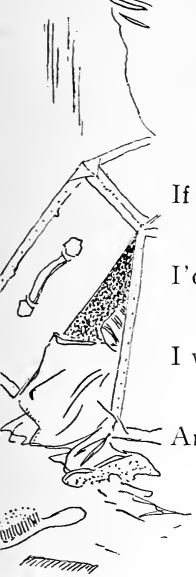


## Getting Even

IF I were a railway brakeman,
I'd call out the stations so plain
That the passenger booked for Texas
Would go clear through to Maine.
I'd open the door of the smoker
And give such a mighty roar
That the people back in the sleeper
Would fall out on the floor.

## Getting Even

For I couldn't afford a tenor voice
That would murmur, and sigh, and speak
In the soft, low tones of Æolian harps
For eleven dollars a week.

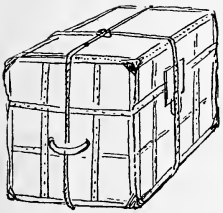


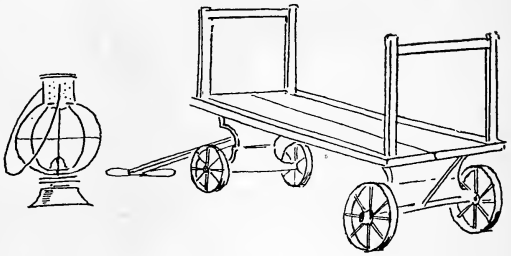
If I were a baggage-master
I'd rattle the trunks about;
I'd stand them up in the corner,
And shake their cargoes out;
I would pull the handles out by the roots,
I would kick the bottoms in,
And strew their stuffing around the car,
And make them lank and thin.
For I couldn't afford to wear kid gloves,
And put pads on my feet,
And fondle things gently, when all my pay
Just kept me in bread and meat.

If I were a railway conductor,
As through the train I'd go,
I'd have for every question asked—
This ready reply, "Don't know."

## Getting Even

I'd miss connections for lots of men,
I'd run lone passengers past;
I'd tell them 'twas eight, when I knew 'twas ten,
And declare their watches fast.
For I couldn't afford to be civil
When I knew every man in the load
Would look at my watch and ring, and say:
"He stole them things from the road."

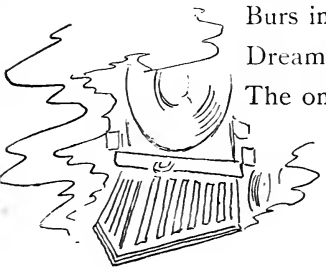




## A Spell of Rhyme

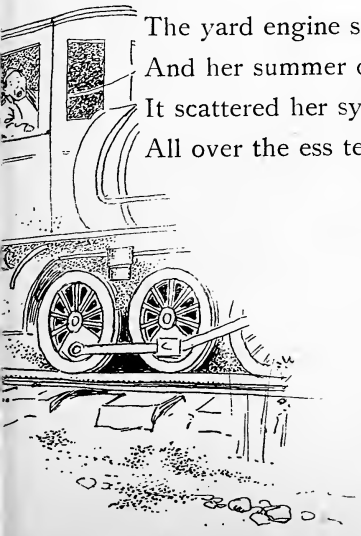
YARD engine "Louisa," B. C-R. & N.,
Was shifting some empties about three p. m.,
When the stoker leaned out of his window to say,
"There's a cow going down the tea arr ay see
kay."

Pensively halted the cow on the track,
Burs in her matted tail, bran on her back;
Dreaming of summer, she seemed not to see
The on-coming yard ee en gee eye en ee.



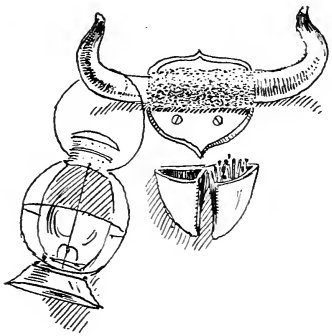
Once more spake the stoker, "Right close is
she now;"
"Bully," the engineer quoth, "for the cow!"
Then reversing his engine he cried, "Shoo, oh
shoo!"
Said the stoker, "Oh, shoot the see oh double
you!"

Shrilly the whistle shrieked forth its alarm,
And the stoker threw firewood and coal in a
swarm;
But the cow never heeded, nor thought that her
star
Was setting at four miles an aitch oh you arr.



The yard engine struck her about amidships,
And her summer dreams went into total eclipse;
It scattered her system, most shocking to see
All over the ess tea arr double ee tea!

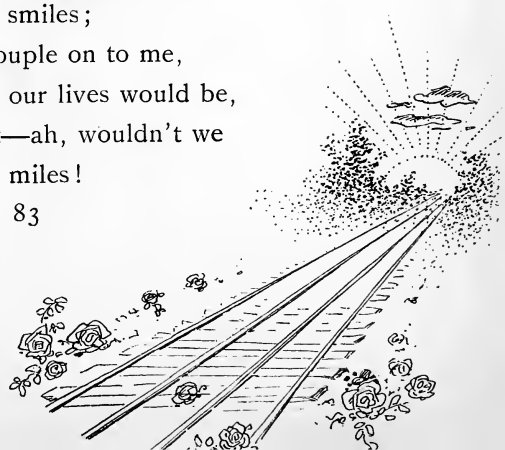
Sadly the engineer drew in his head,
And "pulled her wide open" as onward he sped;
But the stoker laughed gaily, "Old fellow, I say,
There's a mighty cheap cut of ess tea ee aie
kay!"



## The Brakeman's Sweetheart

MY love is like a parlor car,
Perfection all her graces are;
Smoothly, without a frown or jar,
She runs by smiles;
Would she but couple on to me,
How happy then our lives would be,
And east or west—ah, wouldn't we
Make sunny miles!

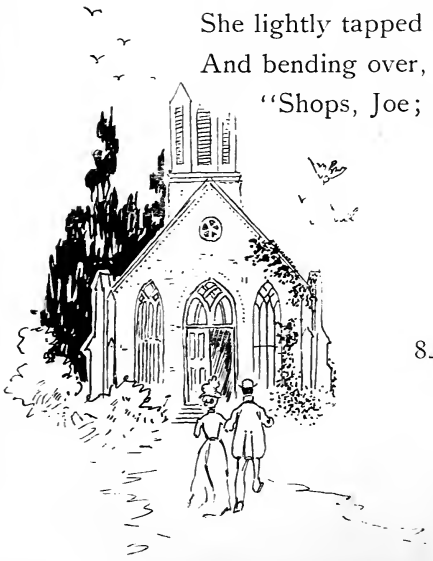




## The Brakeman's Sweetheart

Her eyes electric lamps eclipse;
To think of running daily trips
With orders from her rose-bud lips—
    It makes my head-light!
But sand and steam I seem to lack;
When I'd suggest a double-track,
Her laughing eyes they set me back
    Quick as a red light.

I know she dearly loves to tease,
For once, when on my bended knees,
I told her, with what warmth you please,
    How I adored her,—
With gauzy, perfumed fan outspread
She lightly tapped her lover's head,
And bending over, softly said,
    "Shops, Joe; bad order!"



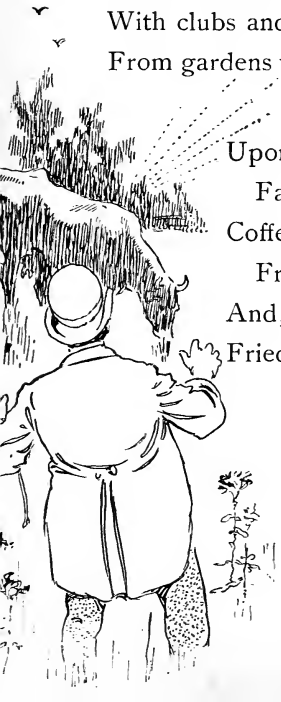
## Evening

THE sun sinks down the distant west—
Where'er the west may be,
Until the city building's crest
Shuts off its light from me.
It can not hide behind a hill
And so it hides behind a mill.

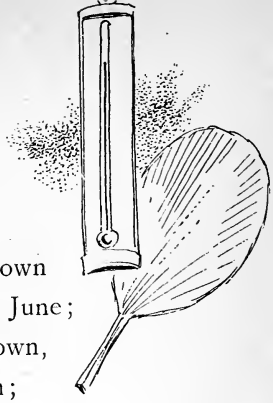
## Evening

The whistles blow their evening tune—
  How shrill their echoes from afar!
How sweet to sniff the dust of June
  And rush to catch the twilight car!
While in its smoke, and dust, and heat,
A fat man stands on both my feet.

Here in the suburb, dusty, gray,
  Roar the loud mouthings of a row;
I feel no fear; it is the way
  My neighbor urges home his cow;
With clubs and yells she must be led
From gardens wrecked, where she hath fed.

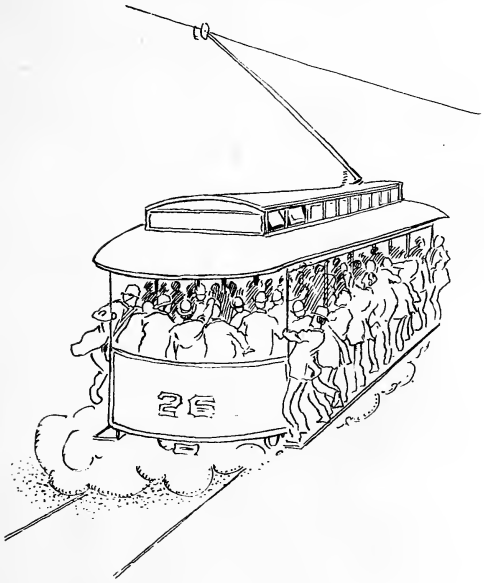


Upon the soft, domestic air,
  Faint, sensuous odors drift along—
Coffee, potatoes, beefsteak rare,
  Fried onions, eggs, tripe and oolong;
And, daintier tastes to lure and please,
Fried liver, ham, and castile cheese.



## Evening

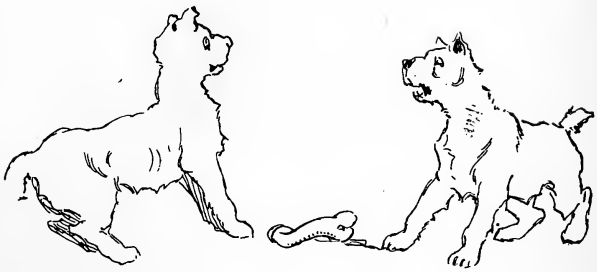
Oh, blissful eve! How blest the town
That swelters thus through leafy June;
How blest to watch the ice melt down,
To serve the butter with a spoon;
To list the trolley's gonging chime
And know that it is evening time.

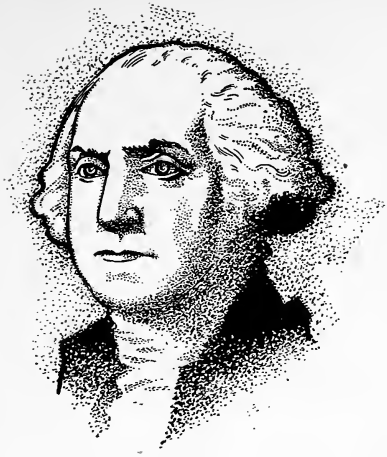


# Politics

Let none presume
To wear an undeserved dignity.
O, that estates, degrees and offices
Were not derived corruptly; and that clear honor
Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!
How many then should cover, that stand bare!
How many be commanded, that command!

MERCHANT OF VENICE.





## What Lack We Yet?

WHEN Washington was president
He was a mortal icicle;
He never on a railroad went,
And never rode a bicycle.

He read by no electric lamp,
Ne'er heard about the Yellowstone;
He never licked a postage stamp,
And never saw a telephone.

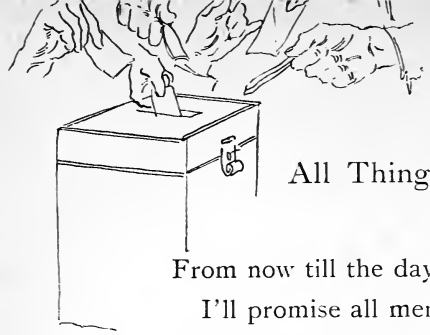
## What Lack We Yet?

His trousers ended at his knees;
By wire he could not snatch dispatch;
He filled his lamp with whale-oil grease,
And never had a match to scratch.

But in these days it's come to pass,
All work is with such dashing done,
We've all these things, but then, alas—
We seem to have no Washington!

## All Things to All Men

I'VE run all the old parties over
And now to a new one must go;
I think there are offices somewhere,
If I'd had any kind of a show.
Then give me some sort of a show—oh ho!
I'm a rather "weak sister" I know;
But I'd run my legs off for an office,
If I only knew which way to go.



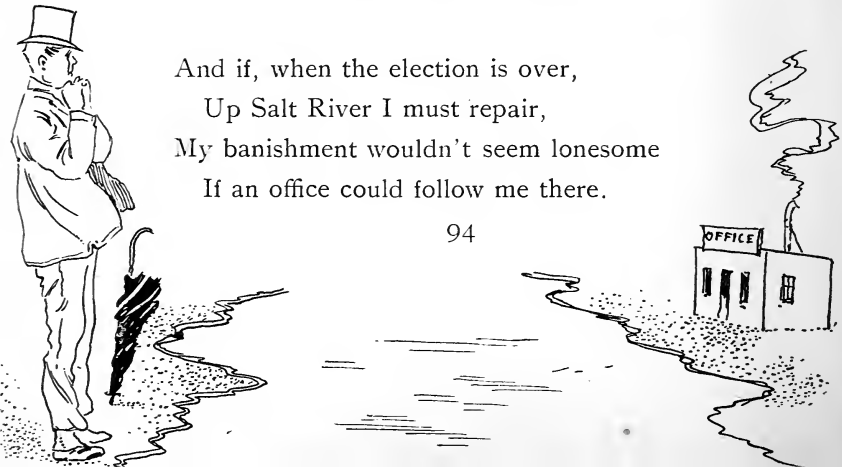
## All Things to All Men

From now till the day of election,
I'll promise all men everything;
And it's awful to think my rejection,
The votes, when they're counted, may bring.
Then give me some sort of a show—oh ho!
Into any new party I'll go!
For the starvingest kind of an office
I'll be anything that I know.

Please keep your eyes open and watchful
And when any new party you see
That is wanting a man for an office
Just kindly refer them to me.
For I'm always ready to go—you know!
Where an office its shadow may throw;
I'd swim through the broad Mississippi
For the littlest office I know.

And if, when the election is over,
Up Salt River I must repair,
My banishment wouldn't seem lonesome
If an office could follow me there.





So follow me up when I go—oh ho!
And write on my tombstone, you know—
"If you're hunting a man for an office,
Just wake up the fossil below!"

## The Day We Do Not Celebrate

ONE famous day in great July
John Adams said, long years gone by,

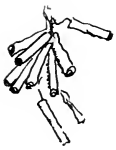
"This day that makes a people free
Shall be the people's jubilee,

"With games, guns, sports, and shows displayed,
With bells, pomp, bonfires, and parade,

"Throughout this land, from shore to shore,
From this time forth, forevermore."

The years passed on, and by and by,
Men's hearts grew cold in hot July.





And Mayor Hawarden Cholmondely said
"Hof rockets Hi ham sore hafraid;

"Hand hif you send one hup hablaze,
Hi'll send you hup for sixty days."

Then said the Mayor O'Shay McQuade,
"Thayre uz no nade fur no perade."

And Mayor Hans Von Schwartzenmeyer
Proclaimed, "I'll haf me no bonfier!"

Said Mayor Baptiste Raphael
"No make-a ring-a dat-a bell!"

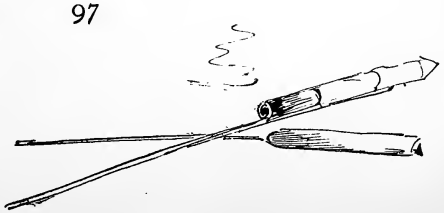
"By gar!" cried Mayor Jean Crapaud,
"Zis July games vill has to go!"

And Mayor Knud Christofferrssonn
Said, "Djeath to hjjim who fjjres a gjjunn!"

At last, cried Mayor Wun Lung Lee—
"Too muchee hoop-la boberee!"

And so the Yankee holiday,
Of proclamations passed away.





## In Medio Tutissimus Ibis

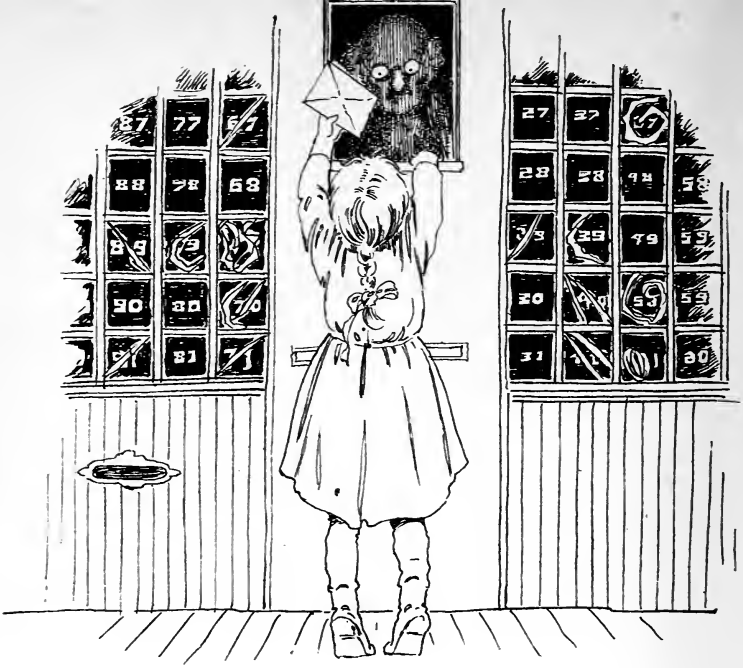
LET other men wrangle and strive,
And struggle, and scheme, and contrive,
For me 'tis discreeter, and meeter, and sweeter
To sit on the fence by myself;
I know that the scorn of the world
At my meaningless mean will be hurled,
But I have no measure, or leisure, or pleasure
To struggle for power and pelf.

## In Medio Tutissimus Ibis

There are fellows whose greatest delight
Is to seek for the heart of the fight
And jostle and shoulder the older and bolder,
And knock out the timid and slim;
So if I, of a peace-loving mind,
To roost on the fence am inclined,
Small odds if they hiss me, or kiss me, or miss me,
For keeping up out of the swim.

If ever I go to a war,
I will go in the medical corps,
And then while they're fighting and biting and smiting,
And shedding bad language and gore,
I'll turn from the strife I abhor,
Both sides of the field I'll explore,
Where the wounded are creeping, and weeping, and sleeping,
Sweet balm in their hurts I will pour.

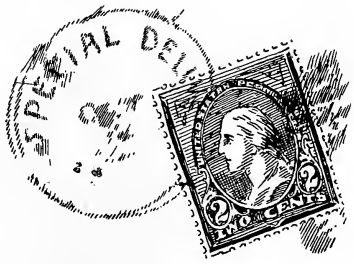
L. of C.



## The Postmaster

LONG years he dwelt behind the latticed wall,
Built of glass boxes where he mislaid mail;
With gentle patience answered every call,
And licked the stamps for childhood, sweet and frail.
Administrations changed with rise and fall—
Serene he weathered every shifting gale;
His Civil Service rules were few and fit,
And framed to catch the passing perquisite.

So in the service he grew old and gray,
  And oft he put the stamps on upside down;
Missorted letters in a strange, vague way,
  And sent Smith's paper out to Jones, by
    Brown.
Till Special Agent Death came in one day,
  And pouched the old man through to Grave-
    yard town.
He lay quite still; then suddenly he cried—
"Mail closed!" and drew his salary and died.

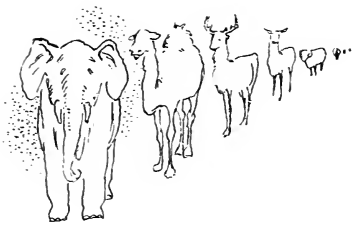


## After the Battle

SPREAD straw and tan-bark on the street,
Let not one Sabbath church bell ring;
Put shoes of list on horses' feet,
And muffle every noisy thing.
Throttle the man who lifts his voice!
Let every mouth be closed and dumb;
In secret, silent thought rejoice
That all the world is still and numb.

## After the Battle

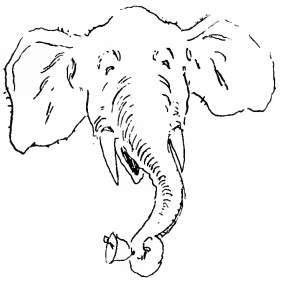
Oh, gracious Silence! At thy throne
With voiceless lips we kiss the dust;
Thy noiseless reign with joy we own,
And hail thy speechless judgments just!
For past is our Election day—
We tell it thee with grateful tears!
Send us no other one, we pray,
For eighteen hundred thousand years!



# Children of the Ark

"Th' unwieldy elephant,
To make them mirth, us'd all his might, and wreathed
His lithe proboscis."

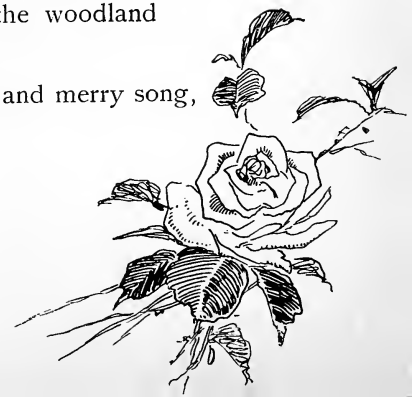
PARADISE LOST.



## The Cricket

I SANG the budding spring away,
And played while summer roses bloomed,
I danced through Autumn's splendid sway,
And when November's shadows gloomed:
And skies and hills, and all the woodland throng
Laughed at my dancing feet and merry song,





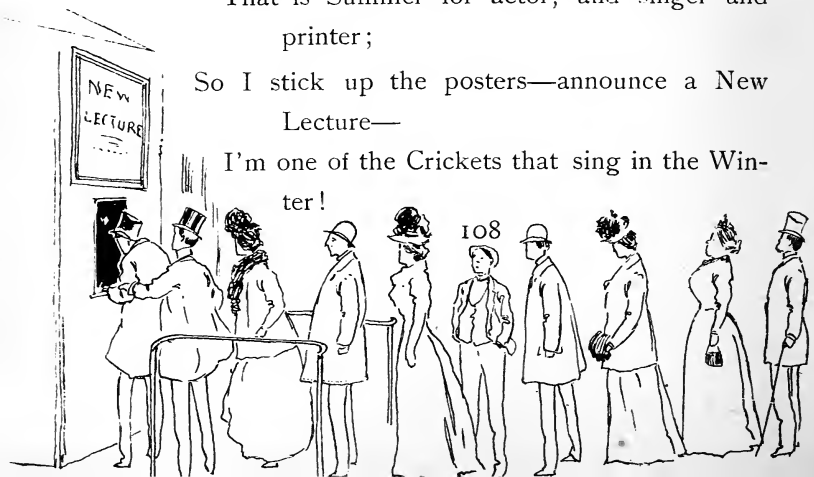
## The Cricket

I mocked the toiling ant with scorn;
I sang, but wrought not, with the bee;
I wooed the joyous birds at morn,
Danced at the June flies' jubilee;
Nor dreamed, or knew, or ever cared to know
That Summer flowers would fade and Winter blow.

Now Winter comes, I have no care,
I ask no ant to give me room;
I sue no bee for dainty fare,
I laugh and sing at Winter's gloom;
And that the Summer time I danced away
Brings no regret to me this Winter's day.

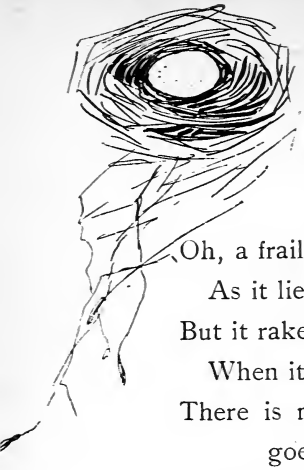
ENVOI.

For this is the season, as you may conjecture,
That is Summer for actor, and singer and printer;
So I stick up the posters—announce a New Lecture—
I'm one of the Crickets that sing in the Winter!



## The Main-Hatch

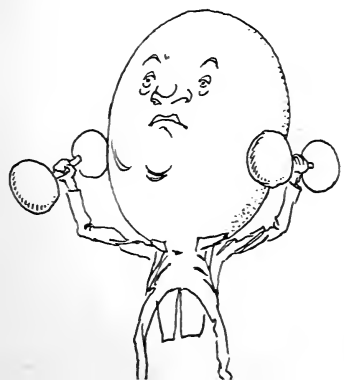
A MINSTREL am I of a single lay,
But I sing it the whole day long,
In the lonely coop, on the crowded way,
I warble my simple song.
Only an egg, with its pure white shell—
The sea has no pearl more fair—
And over that spheroid my cackles I tell,
And my feat diurnal declare.



## The Main-Hatch

Oh, a frail, weak thing is my ovate gem,
As it lies in my straw-lined nest;
But it raketh the orator, stern and stem,
When it catcheth him on the crest.
There is might in its weakness, for lo, when it goes
Down the long afternoon of its life—
It can easily lead a strong man by the nose,
When it mixeth itself in the strife.

I am no bravo; the hawk that swoops
Must seek for me under the thatch;
Yet in open field or in private coop
I always come up to the scratch.
So my rondeau I cackle—too young to crow—
While the Fates may permit me to speak,
For although my son never sets, yet I know
That my days may be ended necks tweak.

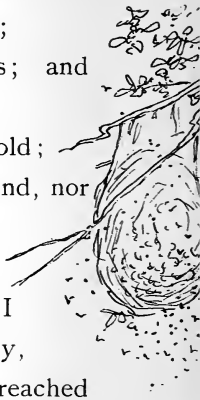


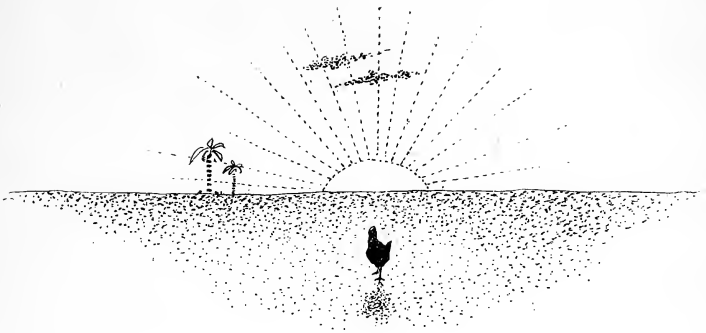
## Dogmatic Philosophy

MY faithful dog,—his actions fairly talk—
Gamboled about me on our morning walk,
And being frivolous—for he was young,
Pursued, with flying feet and clamorous tongue,
The circling birds that skimmed along the ground
And teased, with whistles shrill, the baying hound.

## Dogmatic Philosophy

He snapped at flies, slow buzzing in the air,
And chased the chirping crickets here and there.
At length, with sudden leap, in merry play,
He caught a hornet, passing by that way,
And let him go again, and moaned and sighed;
And scraped his jaws upon the earth, and cried;
And shouted "Fire!"—as a dog might shout
And ran before the wind, and put about;
And shrieked; and gnawed the trees; and snapped and rolled;
Panted and shivered, as with heat and cold;
And would not frisk, nor laugh, nor bound, nor play,
And was not merry any more that day.
"Alas," said I, "how many times have I
Caught at some gauzy pleasure flitting by,
And thought"— but at this point we reached the spot
Where all that hornet's family lived, and I forgot
Just what I thought, and what I sought to say,
In one wild, dog-like rush to get away.





## Orphan Born

I AM a lone, unfathered **chick,**
Of artificial hatching
A pilgrim in a desert wild,
By happier, mothered chicks reviled,
From all relationships exiled,
To do my own lone scratching.

## Orphan Born

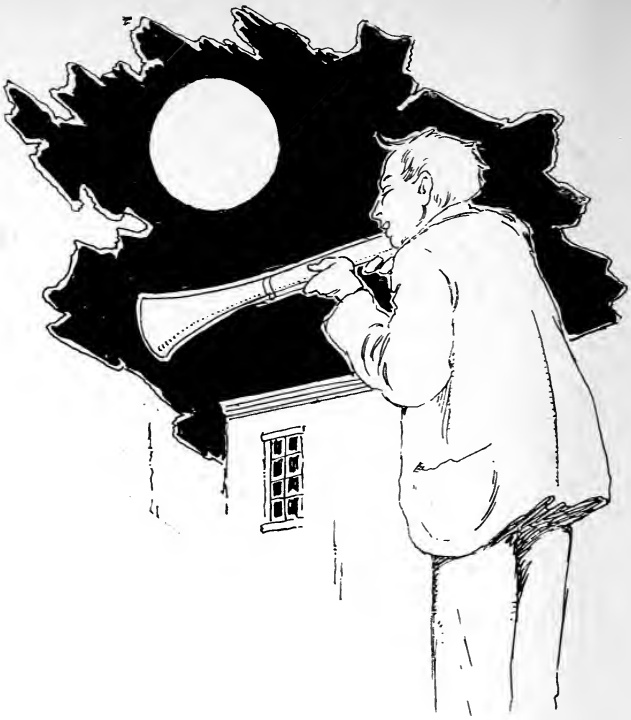
Fair Science smiled upon my birth
  One raw and gusty morning;
But ah, the sounds of barn-yard mirth
To lonely me have little worth;
Alone am I in all the earth—
  An orphan without borning.

Seek I my mother? I would find
  A heartless personator;
A thing brass-feathered, man designe
With steam-pipe arteries intermined,
And pulseless cotton batting lined—
  A patent incubator.

It wearies me to think, you see—
  Death would be better, rather—
Should downy chicks be hatched of me,
By Fate's most pitiless decree,
My piping pullets still would be
  With never a grandfather.

## Orphan Born

And when to earth I bid adieu
To seek a planet greater,
I will not do as others do,
Who fly to join the ancestral crew,
For I will just be gathered to
My Incubator.



## A Cataracket

I LOVE, thee, cat; I love thy pleasant ways;
I love to see thee dozing round the house;
I love, through all these dreamy summer days,
To watch thee circumvent the bashful mouse.
I love to hear thy calm, contented purr,
And stroke thy coat—so near, and yet so fur.

## A Cataracket

But I love not, when starry night is come,
To hear thee, cat, with velvet-padded hoof,
Rapid as taps upon a muffled drum,
Or summer rain drops pattering on the roof.
For, when thy claws slip from their velvet jacket,
Thou art a wild Niagara-cat; a cat a racket.

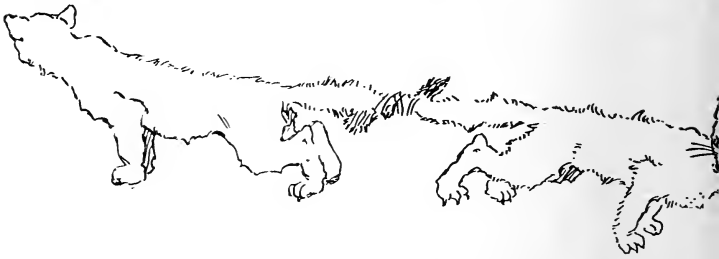
Grimalkin! When the radiant moonlight falls
In silver splendor on the haunted shed,
Oft must I listen to thy plaintive wauls
That drive sweet sleep from my distracted bed.
It wakes mine ire to hear thy long-drawn shout—
"Maria! Oh, Maria! Comin' out?"

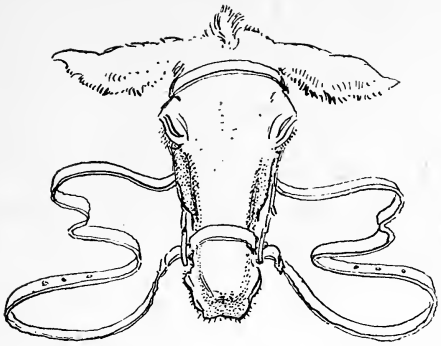
Why dost thou rage, vain cat, when sable night
With "dewy freshness fills the silent air"?
Why dost thou climb the roof to yell and fight,
And rip, and spit, and snort, and claw and swear?
Dost thou not blush, oh cat, when rosy dawn
Sees half thy fur clawed out, and one eye gone?

## A Cataracket

Go, gentle cat; go from my lap and prowl
  Upon the dizzy woodshed's beetling height;
On lofty dormer window sit and howl
  And everything that weareth cat-fur, fight;
And I will love thee none the less, for that,
Because I would not have thee less a cat.

Yet hear! When midnight pauses in the sky,
  I will arise from sleepless couch of mine,
And guided by thine animated cry,
  And by thine eyes so brilliantly that shine—
I will take down my trusty culverin,
And with six pounds of buckshot fill thy skin.





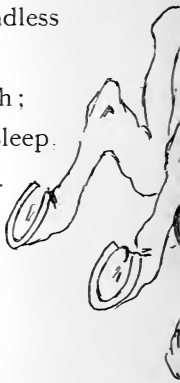
## Lines to a Mule

THE smile of spring is blessing all the hills,
The robin's note sounds from the shadowed vale;
The blue bird's matin all the morning fills,
The brown leaves rustle in the greening trail;
While thy insistent song with gladsome ring
Whoops o'er the fields, a live, reboant thing.

## Lines to a Mule

Full well I know thy carol; many a day
I've waked at dawn to hear thee cry for feed,
And, startled by thy sudden, clamorous bray,
Have execrated all thy patient breed;
And I have wept to see thy restless hoof
Lift a man through the raftered stable roof.

Yet art thou kind. I never knew thee, mule,
Kick man or Indian whom thou couldst not reach;
And thou hast learned in life's hard, friendless school
Alway to practice better than you preach;
For while, with drooping lids you seem to sleep,
Still do your heels their tireless vigils keep.



# Bucolics

"As I read
I hear the crowing cock, I hear the note
Of lark and linnet, and from every page
Rise odors of ploughed field or flowery mead."

LONGFELLOW.

## The Pierian Spring

DEAR, vernal flowers, they bloom again
Like echoes of old spring days gone,
And mossy hillside, shadowy glen
Break out in beauty like the dawn.
The plumy fern, the leaf and bud
Bend 'neath the kisses of the breeze
And "Spanish Mixture for the Blood"
Smiles from the fences, rocks and trees.

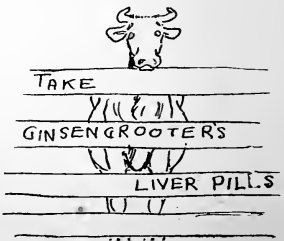
## The Pierian Spring

Balm-breathing Spring! what tender hope
Exhales from the awakening soil.
How "Bolus' Anti-Bilious Dope"
And "Doctor Gastric's Blizzard Oil"
Bid fainting nature wake and smile,
For all her beauties fill us less
With thoughts of violets than with vile
"Root Cures" for "Chronic Biliousness."

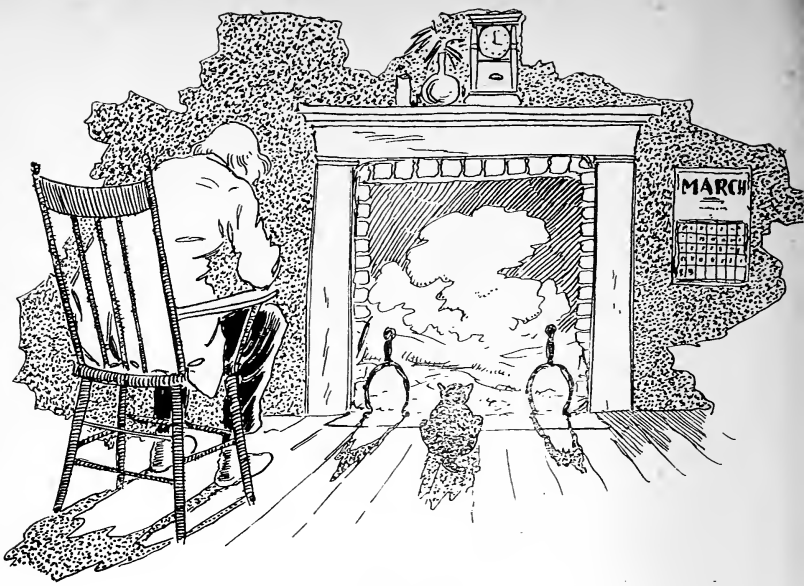
If to the wooded nook we stray
Where every swelling germ is huge
With life, each gray-browed rock will say
"Use Philogaster's Vermifuge."
If from these sylvan bowers we fly,
We fly, alas, to other ills;
The farm-yard gates and barn-doors cry
"Take Ginsengrooter's Liver Pills."

Each blue-eyed violet hides a "Pill,"
There's scent of "Rhubarb" in the air;
"Rheumatic Plasters" crown the hill
And "Bitters" blossom everywhere;





With "Ague Cures" the eye is seared,
The air is thick—or thin, I meant—
For Nature's face and clothes are smeared
With "Universal Liniment."

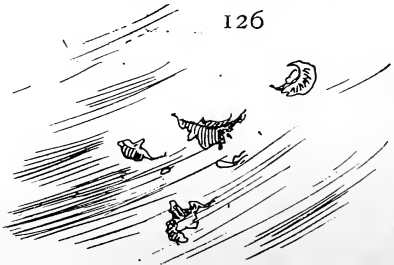



## March

COME, Phyllis, the reign of the winter is past,
'Tis time for the earth to awaken;
The sheep are all frozen in Spring's early blast
And the shepherd with ague is shaken.

The ice on the river is eight inches thick,
But the time of the Winter is over;
We can stroll to the stack-yard and nose round the rick
For the perfume of last summer's clover.





## March

Though the groundhog and crocus creep into
their holes
It's Spring, and the almanac shows it;
Though a polar wave over the continent rolls
It's Spring! And we don't care who knows it!

## The Seedsman

HOW doth the busy nurseryman
Improve each shining hour;
And peddle cions, sprouts and seeds
Of every shrub and flower.

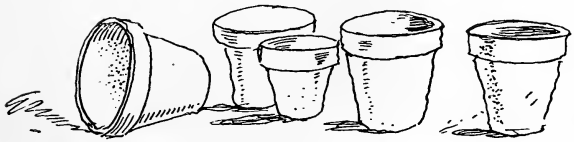
How busily he wags his chin,
How neat he spreads his store,
And sells us things that never grew
And won't grow any more.

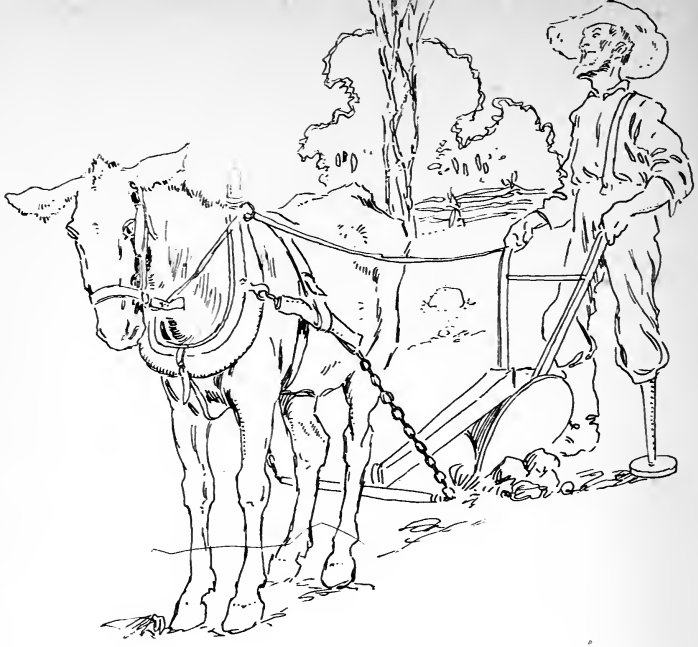
## The Seedsman

Who showed the little man the way
To sell the women seed?
Who taught him how to blow and lie
And coax and beg and plead?

He taught himself, the nurseryman;
And when his day is done
We'll plant him where the lank rag weeds
Will flutter in the sun.

But oh, although we plant him deep
Beneath the buttercup,
He's so much like the seed he sells,
He never will come up.





## In Time of Peace

THE pipe of the quail in the stubblefield
The scent of the new-mown hay;
And all day long the shout and the song
Of the reapers so far away.

The rasping racket amid the grain,
The clack of the reaping machine,
And ever again the howl of pain
Comes over the meadow green.

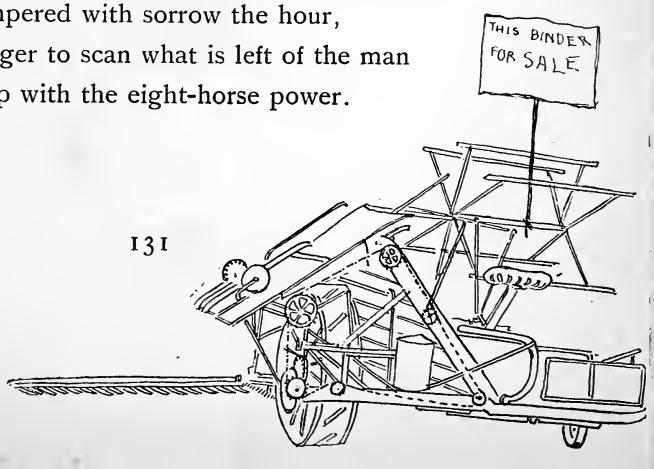
## In Time of Peace

Oh, sweet is the field where the meadow lark flits
And sings, as it soars and dives,
Where the farm-hand sits and yells as he gits
His fingers among the knives.

No longer we hear on the hill-slopes near
The scythe-stone's clinkety-clink,
But the mowing machine cuts his leg off, I ween,
Or ever the man can think.

With fears and with tears the good wife hears
The goodman say "Good-bye,"
To return in sooth with a horse-rake tooth
A foot and a half in his eye.

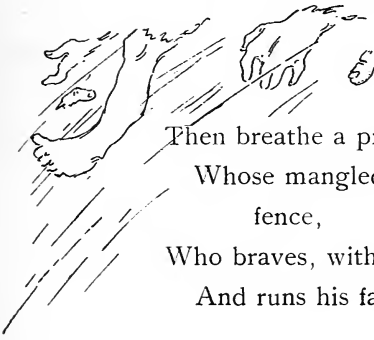
When the threshers come in with halloo and din,
How tempered with sorrow the hour,
As they linger to scan what is left of the man
Mixed up with the eight-horse power.



## In Time of Peace

Oh, listen and weep! From over the hills
What voice for the doctor begs?
'Tis the plough-boy who fell, and shocking to tell,
The steam-plough ran over his legs.

Thus, all day long with rollicking song
They laugh at these dread alarms,
Though the peaceful field a war-harvest yield
Of fingers, and legs, and arms.



ENVOI.

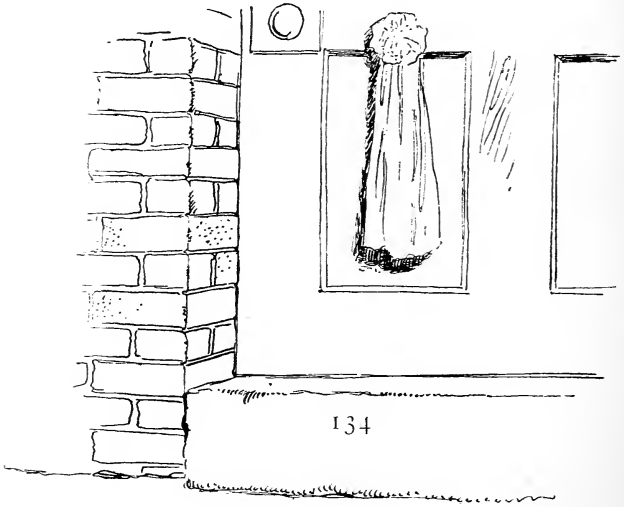
Then breathe a prayer for a poor old granger
Whose mangled limbs have borne him to the fence,
Who braves, with royal courage, untold danger
And runs his farm with modern implements.

## May Day

COME, Pepita, Phyllis, Griselda, Jeannette,
Evangeline, Heloise, Fifine, Susette,
Rebecca, Nan, Marguerite, Clara, Babette—
Or whatever your name is;
Come, get on your mackintosh, poncho, umbrell,
Clogs, overshoes, pattens, "gums," mufflers as well,
And hey! for the green woods! I may as well tell—
A-Maying the game is.

## May Day

We'll twine our May garlands beneath the green tree,
We'll make the swamp ring with our innocent glee,
We'll wade round our May-pole, light-hearted and free,
Where naught but delight is!
Then homeward we'll dance, when the twilight is come,
With diphtheria, croup, and pneumonia dumb,
With phthisis, lumbago and rheumatiz-zum
And peritonitis.



## Rime of the Ancient Miller

IT is an Ancient Miller,
And he stoppeth two or three;
"By thy mild blue eye and thy floury coat,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?
The Christmas turkey fast doth brown,
The revels soon begin;"
"I have a note falls due in town
And I must lift it in;"
"And I am fain to catch a train,
So I must run like sin."

The Ancient Miller meeteth three men in a great hurry, and stoppeth them to take a vote.

He shooteth off his little joke, at which his audience shed "tears, idle tears."

He holds them with his mealy hand,
A grinding face hath he—
"I wist thou wilt list unto my grist,
When I have tolled it thee."
He chuckled hoarsely at his jest,
And sadly out of tram,
Each halted guest, with pain suppressed
An overfalling dam.

The audience keepeth up a lively thinkin'.

His glittering cock-eye held them fast,
Whenas his tale he spake;
"He's out of balance, first and last,"
Quoth they, "just hear him grate."

But the A. M. letteth himself go Gallagher.

"I am an Ancient Miller Man,
And every hundred years
My bedstone cold I leave to hold
Converse with mortal ears.
The smell is sweet of growing wheat,
When dimpling fields I see;
And the lark's song the hills along
Is psalm of praise to me;

## Rime of the Ancient Miller

The swaying reapers bend and sing
  Amid the golden grain;
I hear their songs who toil in throngs
  Around the harvest wain;
The quail's low whistle softly calls
  Above the stubbled plain;
With royal nod the golden rod
  Approves the sumac's stain;
I hear once more on puncheon floor
  The hard flail's muffled sound,
The mirthful roar that tells once more
  The threshers are around;
The flying chaff and lighter laugh
  Go drifting down the wind;
But golden wheat and love-words sweet—
  The best is left behind.
Down the long slope, sunlit with hope,
  The croaking wain draws near,
And the clacking mill and the singing rill
  Are the music sweet I hear.

He droppeth into a reminiscent strain, which is great medicine for a man who enjoyeth the sound of his own voice.

Bully for the quail!

The sound of the jolly thresher is never muffled.

Come off!

Whoa, January!

He getteth his second wind, and—

"Over the low half-door I see
The miller's daughter lean;
In sun and shade the sweetest maid
By mortal vision seen.

Describeth a truly good man with no flies on him.

The good, gray miller who bends to kiss
The maid as he goes by,
With honor's trace on his manly face,
And honesty in his eye,

"Who doth proudly wear his silver hair,
A crown of integritee—
That all may say, who pass his way,
'A man of men is he'—
Is as like to the man your eyes now scan,
As a man to himself can be."

No encore.

And the miller bowed to the silent crowd—
"Did you say rats?" quoth he.

The A. M. cusseth and eke he sweareth.

"Odds boddikins! 'Y gum! Gogswouns!
Fore gad! Ah, well-a-day!
Marry come up! I'fackins! Zounds!
Gadzooks! Alack-a-day!

"The bolted flour, like snow-cloud flake,
  Fell down as soft and fair;
The wheaten cake the maids did bake
  Was lighter than the air;
And the new-made bread, the good man
      said,
Was soothing as a prayer.

He telleth how his mother used to could bake bread (Ting ling).

"From Boston town of great renown,
  And wondrous bookerie,
A maid mature, of aspect dure,
  Went teaching cookerie.

The cooking school woman breaks out,

"Down dropped the pan, the sifter
      dropped;
  Down fell the kneading trough;
The broom down dropt, all work was stopt,
  And all the women off.

And all the women leave the reservation, and

"From house about, with laugh and shout,
  They cooked from morn to night,
While men stood hungrily without,
  And could not get a bite.

Take the war path, while the braves stay at home

## Rime of the Ancient Miller

And chew the cud of bitter memories and prospect for grub.

"Alone, alone, all, all alone,
To hunger gaunt consigned,
The men made moan and stayed at home,
And ate what they could find.

But hope deferred maketh them tired.

"They breakfasted upon a sigh,
And gnawed at crusts of bread,
Selah!
Whiles in the kneading trough so dry,
Salt-rising tears they shed.

When the women come marching home again, they have learned to

"When from the school the women came—
Oh, horrible to tell!
He who would eat their proffered treat
Bade health and joy farewell!

Put the in-curves on the French twist, and to make

"The good, white flour the miller made—
Fit food for gods and men—
Ambrosial bran—no human man
Would ever bolt again.

## Rime of the Ancient Miller

"The biscuit which his sister cooks,
Along with other things,
The schoolboy packs in with his books
And slings them from his slings.

Hard finish biscuit, durable and usefnl,

"Bride cake, besides, wrought by the brides,
Half tanned and wire-sewed—
The supervisor oft provides
For mending of the road.

Likewise the famous waterproof, elastic, hand-made angel cake, that

"Oh, friend of mine, that was a time
That tried the soles of men.
Their swollen throats and stomachs' coats
Were tried by leather, then.

Beats the Dutch, and everybody knows whom the Dutch beat.

"Oh, sweeter far in those dark days,
To quiet hunger's wants,
It was to take my reckless ways
To Chinese restaurants.

In his misery he joineth himself unto the pagan heathen; and

## Rime of the Ancient Miller

Can not understand what the heathen have to rage about.

"Oh, sweeter far to eat a rat
By some more Christian name,
Than swallow lead disguised as bread,
And perish just the same.

He exonerateth the honest miller but excommunicateth the "wimmin."

"In vain the honest miller grinds
The finest kind of flour,
If wives and daughters have combined
To bake it sad and sour.

He passeth from narrative to sermon and so

"He loveth best—you know the rest—
Whose wife, so fond and true,
Goes clear up head by baking bread
As his mother used to do.

Reacheth "Finally" and the moral.

"He liveth best, whose wife cooks best,
All things, both great and small;
For the man who eateth them with zest
Loves cook, and grub, and all."

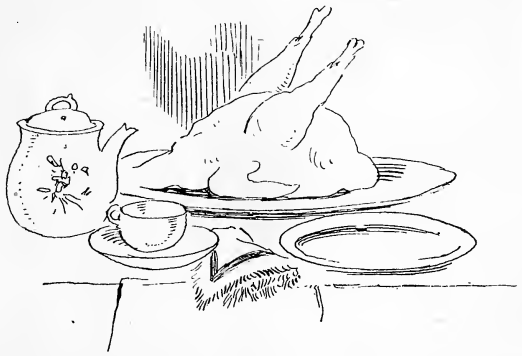
## Rime of the Ancient Miller

The Miller Man, he checks a sigh,
He swalloweth a moan;
He clasps his hand upon his belt,
And, with a muffled groan,
He fadeth quite from out their sight
And they are left alone.

The Ancient Miller retireth to his cold bedstone to conceal his emotion, and the audience

The dinner's cold, the train hath gone,
The note hath cooked his goose;
With one acclaim the guests exclaim—
"That fellow's bush is loose."

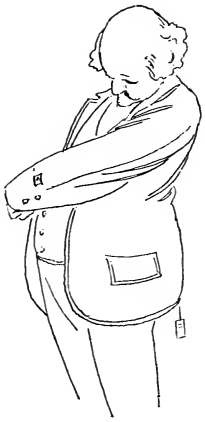
Being left, vote the lecturer a little off.

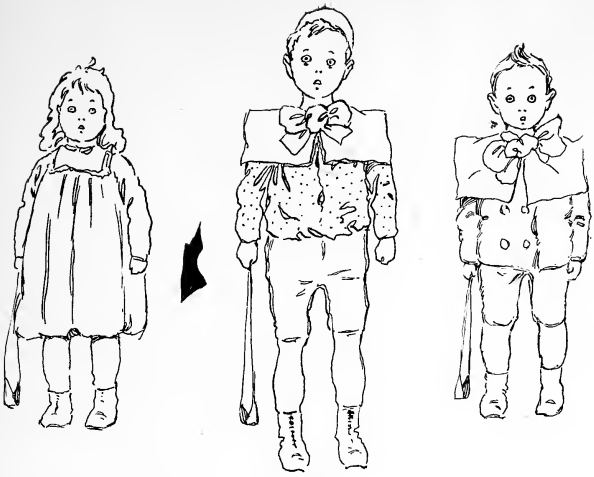


# Tempered Levity

"Joking decides great things
Stronglier and better oft than earnest can."

HORACE.





## Old Wine in New Bottles

FROM the Book of Judges as I read—
"Make me a sling," wee Robbie said,
"Like those you were reading about in there,
That hit the mark to the breadth of a hair.

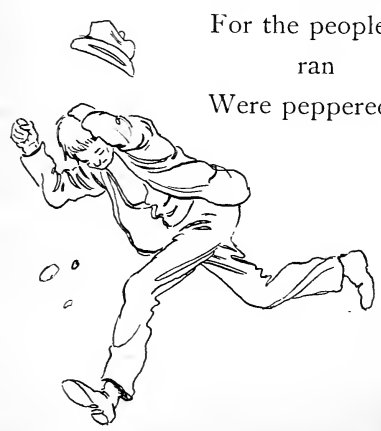
"And make another for Richard, too,
And we'll sling as the Benjamites used to do;
And make another that Baby can twirl—
A little one, mind—she's only a girl."

So I made them slings like unto those
Which Benjamin used against his foes;
"May the songs of victory tune your breath
Like the slingers who smote Kir-haraseth!"

I smiled as I heard the exultant cry
Of the singing slingers marching by;
I smiled in time,—oh, foolish man!—
For I smiled no more when the fight began.

The pebbles crashed through the window pane,
They rattled down on the roof like rain;
They pelted poor Sport clear out of the play,
And battered the Rectory, over the way.

The air was thick with the flying stones,
And vocal with shouts, and wails and groans;
For the people who looked and the people who ran
Were peppered alike by the infantry clan.

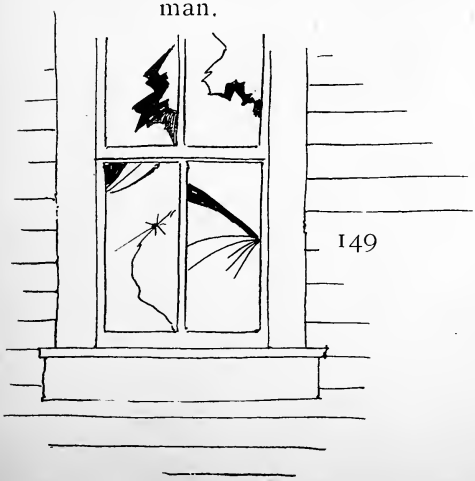


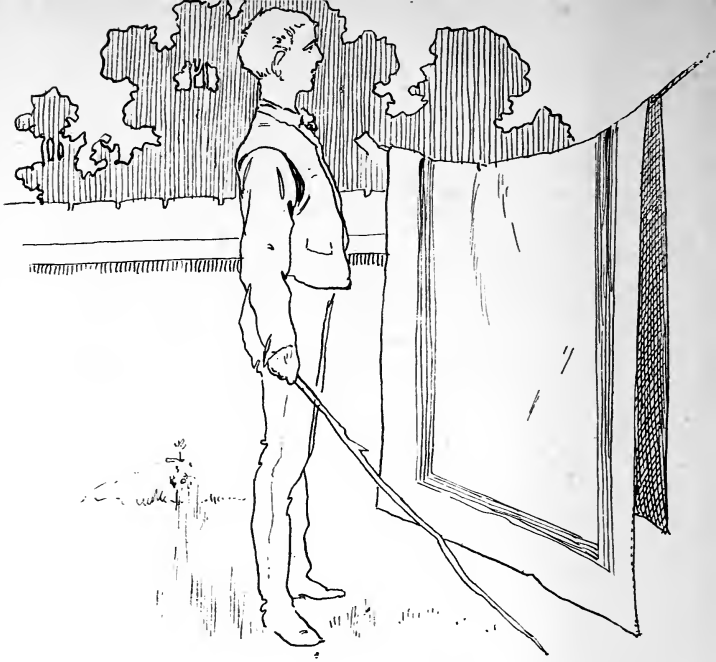
## Old Wine in New Bottles

Richard and Robert, the two mighty men,
Were slinging six ways for Sunday; but then
Baby was weeping—the sweet little maid—
For she slung-shot herself in the shoulder-blade.

Then I knew that no right-handed person can
bring
Old Benjamin's left-handed skill to a sling;
For the left-handed aim of a right-handed man
Distracts a projectile as nothing else can.

And the world suffers much, in a similar way,
From well-meaning men in their serious play;
Naught scatters dismay through his own camp
and clan
Like the left-handed sling of a right-handed
man.





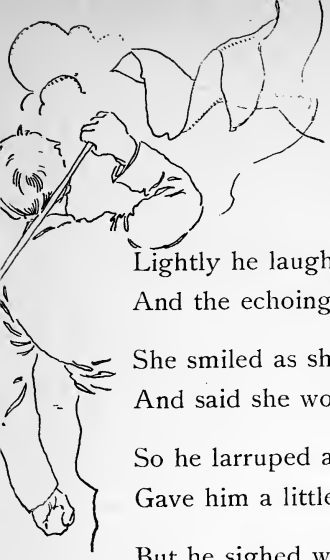
## Sisyphus

JOY of the Spring time! How the sun
Smiled on the hills of Burlington.

The breath of May! And the day was fair,
The bright motes danced in the balmy air.

The sunlight gleamed where the restless breeze
Kissed the fragrant blooms on the apple trees.

His beardless cheek with a smile was spanned
As he stood with a carriage-whip in his hand.



## Sisyphus

Lightly he laughed as he doffed his coat
And the echoing folds of the carpet smote.

She smiled as she leaned on her busy mop,
And said she would tell him when to stop.

So he larruped away till the dinner bell
Gave him a little breathing spell.

But he sighed when the tardy clock struck one,
And she said that his carpet was most half done.

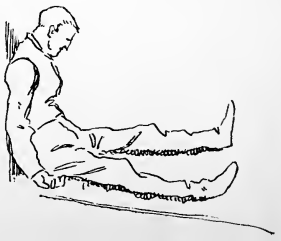
Yet he lovingly put in his liveliest licks,
And whipped like mad until half-past six.

When she said, in a dubious kind of way,
That she "guessed he could finish that side next
day."

Then all that day, and the next day, too,
The fuzz from the dustless carpet flew.

And she'd give it a look at eventide,
And say, "Now whip on the other side."





So the new days came as the old days went,
And the landlord came for his regular rent.

While the neighbors laughed at the whup-zip-boom!
And his face grew shadowed with clouds of gloom.

Till at last, one dreary winter day,
Spurning his life-work, he fled away.

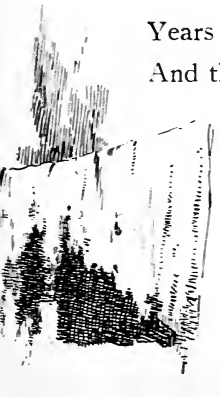
Over the fence and down the street,
Out into the Yon with footsteps fleet.

And never again did the morning sun
Smile on him beating his carpet drum.

Though sometimes a neighbor would say with a yawn—
"Where has the carpet martyr gone?"

* * * * *

Years twice twenty had come and passed
And the carpet mouldered in sun and blast;



## Sisyphus

For never yet since that May grown old
Had hand been laid on its edge or fold.

Over the fence a gray-haired man,
Cautiously clim, clum, clem, clome, clam;

He found him a switch in the old woodpile
And he gathered it up with a sad, grim smile.

A flush passed over his face forlorn,
As he gazed at the carpet, stained and torn.

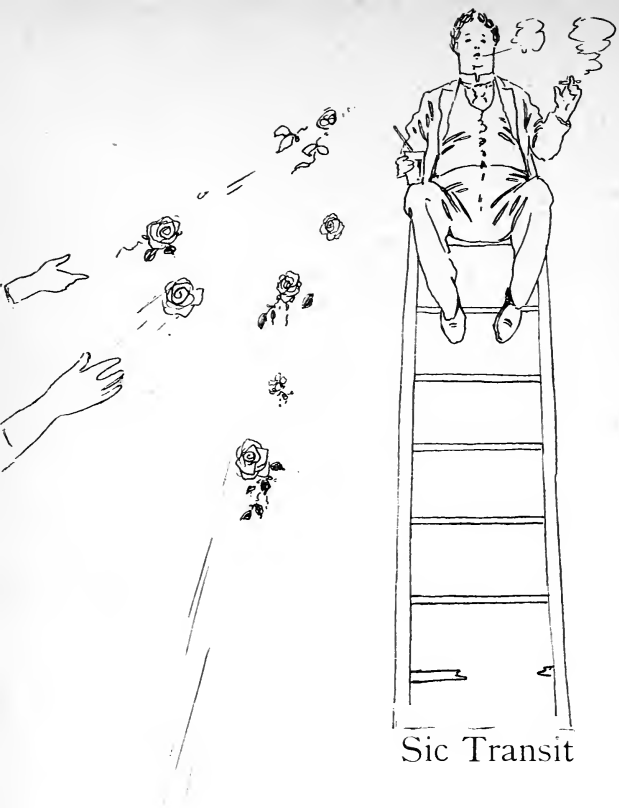
Then he struck it a most resounding thwack,
Till the startled air gave its echoes back.

Out of the window a white face leaned,
While a palsied hand the dim eyes screened.

At once she knew him — she gasped — she sighed—
"A little more on the under side!"

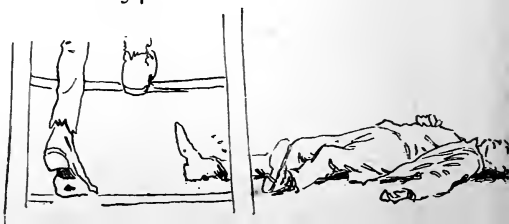
Right down on the ground his stick he throwed,
He shivered, and muttered — "Well, I am blowed!"

Then he turned him away with a heart full sore,
And he never was seen, not none, no more.



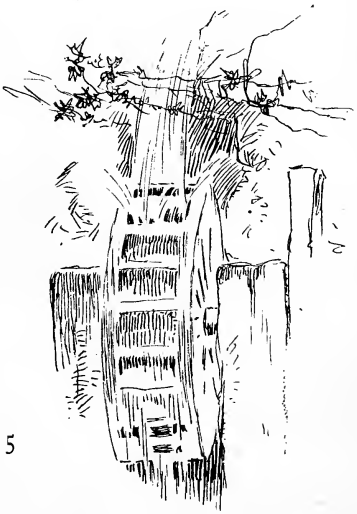
## Sic Transit

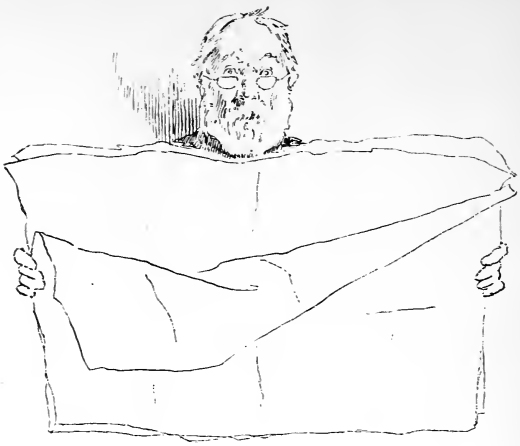
"OH, listen to the water-wheel through all the live-long day"—
Your salary for work will stop when you begin to play;
The fellow at the ladder's top—to him the honors go,
The beginner at the bottom, nobody cares to know;



## Sic Transit

No good is any "Has Been," in country or in
town—
Nobody cares how high you've been, if you
have tumbled down.
If you have been the President, and can't be
any more,
You may run a farm, or teach a school, or keep
a country store;
No one will ask about you; you never will be
missed—
The mill will only grind for you while you sup-
ply the grist.



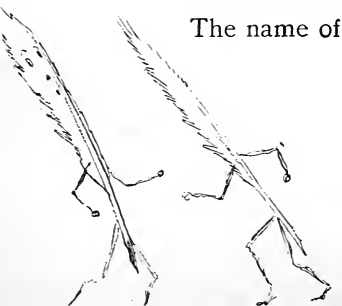


## Bravest of the Brave

I SEE no more the gray an' blue
'At I seed in the war I fit into;
But I read in the papers now an' then,
They're fitin' it still weth the cold steel pen.

I read the pieces, an' often think
In all this eefusion of gallant ink,
How ever' one of 'em jest leaves out
The name of the bravest man 'at fout.





## Bravest of the Brave

There's fellers a writin' about the war
'At nobody ever knowed before;
An' never a word, you understand,
'Bout Corp'l Alexander Rand.

In ever' paper, west an' east,
Them writes the most 'at fit the least;
But they was cheers an' carnage when
Brave Corp'l Rand led on his men.

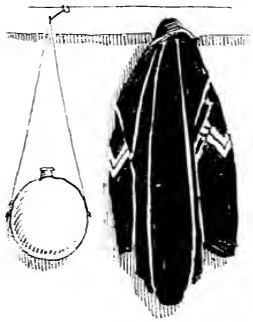
When Grant was in that awful mess
A fightin' in the wilderness,
Says Meade, "Who bears the battle's heft?"
Says Grant, "It's Rand, 'at holds the left."

When Rebeldom was out o' j'int,
An' Lincoln come from City P'int,
"Well, well!" says he, weth honest joy,
"There's Corp'l Rand, of Eelinoy!"

## Bravest of the Brave

An' yit I ain't, ner you ain't seen
His pictur in a magazine;
The bravest man 'at ever drored
In Freedom's cause a soldier's sword.

The keenest, slickest, bravest man
To plan—er execute a plan;
Ef long as time his fame don't stand,
My name ain't Alexander Rand!

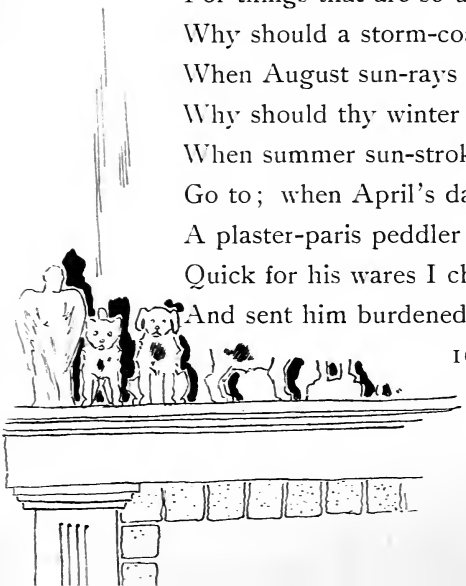


## The Odd I See

WHAT time Ulysses, in the frosty morn,
Prepares to face the bleak November storm,
His well-saved winter garmenture he seeks
And in each closet's dark recess he peeks.
"Eheu," cries he, "my ulster is not here,
Nor in their place my heavy boots appear;
My sealskin cap, when I would put it on,
From its accustomed peg is surely gone.
I see no scarf; by Venus and her loves!
Some son of Mercury hath swiped my gloves!

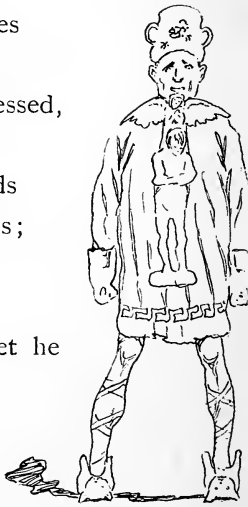
Mehercule! who's got my chest-protector?
I'm cleaned out by some vile old-clothes collector!''
With that he ripped, and roared, and fumed and ''swar,''
While all his household looked on from afar.

To him at length, with grieving, downcast eyes,
Faithful Penelope, distracted, cries:
''Ulysses, peace! Such actions more become
A Trojan steeped in old New England rum.
Why wag thy tongue in neither rhyme nor reason,
For things that are so useless out of season?
Why should a storm-coat cumber up the wall
When August sun-rays fiercely on us fall?
Why should thy winter boots impede our way
When summer sun-strokes hold their fatal sway?
Go to; when April's days were growing long
A plaster-paris peddler came along;
Quick for his wares I changed each winter robe,
And sent him burdened down the dusty road.



Methinks, forsooth, thy senseless rant 'll cease,
When thou behold'st our plastered mantel-
piece.''

He views the mantel; on his knotted face,
Frowns scatter smiles, and smiles the dark frowns
chase.
He pauses for a space, then sits him down
And makes him ready for a trip down town.
First pulls, goloshal screens from slush and sleet,
Two plaster-paris kittens on his feet.
Around his neck, with cotton thread he ties
A snow-white angel with the bluest eyes;
Napoleon, with his crossed arms firmly pressed,
He binds upon his cough-affected chest;
Two jet black dogs with gilded collar bands
He draws for gauntlets on his sinewy hands;
Last, a Pan-legged, rampant billy goat
Swings o'er his shoulders for an overcoat.
Loud laugh the gods, as down the street he
strides,
And e'en Penelope his style derides.



## The Putty Man

YOU may reason with a fool till his muddled brain grows clear,
You may teach an idiot to think if you will persevere;
But all the wisdom, all the patience, ever learned or planned
Can't teach a lesson to the man who will not understand.

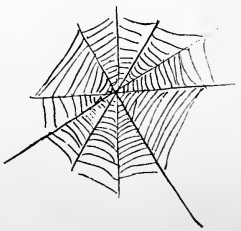
## The Putty Man

You can teach a pig the alphabet; I reckon, if
you try,
A parrot may be taught to read; a man may
learn to fly;
It's possible that men may learn to twist a rope
of sand,
But the angels couldn't teach the man who will
not understand.

Some patient men have trained the restless winds
to tow our ships;
The deaf man hears you talking by the motion
of your lips;
And men have broken flees to harness—worked
them four in hand—
But omniscience can not train the man who will
not understand.

The spiders teach us how to put up screens
against the flies,
And blind men teach their teachers how to see
without their eyes;





## The Putty Man

Each living thing in all the world has answered some demand
Except the man who doesn't want to learn to understand.

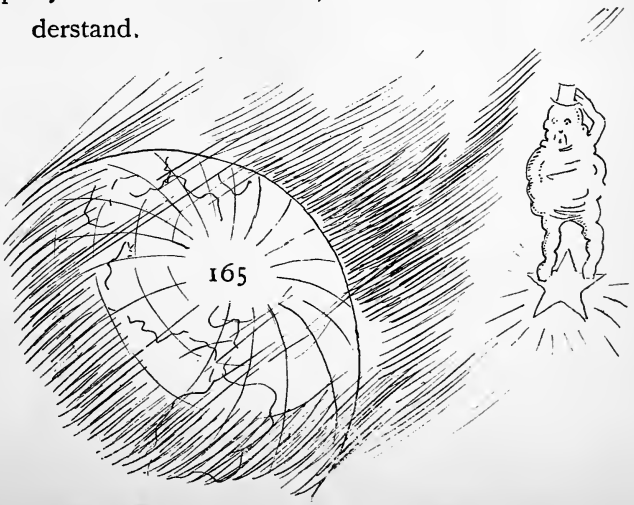
The granite rock will shatter at the one and hundredth blow;
The April sun will smile away the mountain drift of snow;
The lightning's bolt will split in twain the toughest oak on land,
But nothing shakes the putty man who will not understand.

From cold and sullen flint the steel can waken sparks of fire,
Bright Freedom's torch the slave's dumb soul with courage will inspire;
The miser throws away his gold at Duty's stern command,
But nothing thrills the man of dough, who will not understand.

## The Putty Man

He's there, just where he's always been, and
there he's going to stay
Through time and half eternity, forever and a
day;
He will not throb, nor quiver, nor thrill, nor
stand, nor fall,
Nor run, nor fly, nor laugh, nor cry; he's putty,
that is all.

I reckon when at last old Time has run his long,
long race,
And the Universe goes crashing off in endless,
starless space—
There's just one thing that won't be in the trans-
formation grand—
The putty man—he'll see it all, but will not un-
derstand.



## On the Coast of Man

MY little boy, with voice and eyes
Lures me with boyish plea and boast
To where the snow clad hills arise
And reckless urchins swiftly coast.

Why not? Again I am a boy—
I am his brother, not his sire;
His steel shod sled our common toy,
His callow pleasures my desire.

## On the Coast of Man

Down glacial slopes, with merry cheers,
We sweep, as swallows skim the shore;
I throw away full thirty years
And I am ten again; no more.

My youthful pride comes back to me;
My boyhood's skill and courage, too;
I bid the Prince stand back and see
The way his father used to do.

Alone I climb the highest hill;
I poise the sled upon its brow;
In wonder lost the Prince stands still,
And starts, to hear my warning "Now!"

Swifter than winged thought I fly,
But when my flight is half-way through,
A "thank-you-marm" lifts me on high
Into the air a mile or two.

And down that dizzy, reeling track
Like twenty men and sleds I go;
While up my legs and down by back
Packs fifteen thousand pounds of snow.

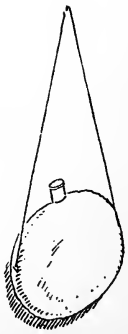
I crawl out to the light again
And feebly share the Prince's fun;
While something tells my whirling brain
That I am really forty-one.

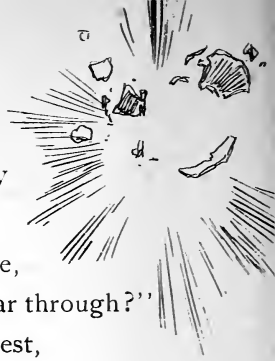
And so I say, "so late 'tis grown
That I must hurry home to tea;"
While Robbie, coasting down alone,
Shouts "'Fraid cat! 'fraid cat!" after me.

## The Private's Glory

SWEET little Major, he mounts my knee,
And the dancing blue eyes look at me;
"Please tell me, Popsie, just once more,
What did you do when you went to war?"

And then I tell of the autumn day
When the Forty-seventh marched away;
How Miles at Corinth field went down,
And Cromwell fell at Jackson town.





"But how many rebels, tell me true,
Did you kill then, and the whole war through?"
And I tell him how, with martial zest,
Joe Reed blew up a limber chest.

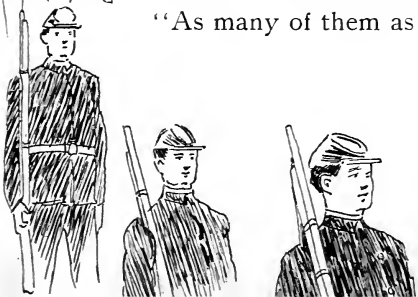
But the Major sticks to his question still—
"How many rebels did you kill?"
So I tell him how, near set of sun,
The charge was made and the battle won.

And how, the day McClure was shot,
And Vicksburg's fight was fierce and hot,
Brave Sam Law took C company in
Through flame and smoke and batteries' din.

How over our heads the battle broke
With hurtling shell and saber stroke—
But he wanted to know, the little elf,
"How many men did you kill yourself?"

"Say, tell me, Popsie, say you will—
How many rebels did you kill?"
So I tell him the truth, as near as may be.—
"As many of them as they did of me."





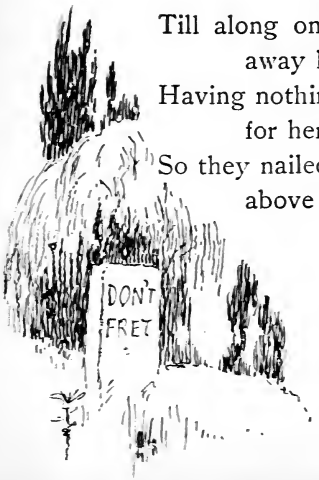
## Don't Fret

I ONCE knew a woman and her face would be
a-bloomin'
Till yet;
But whate'er the fates would do, man, in a way
most inhuman
She'd fret.
If her husband stayed away longer than a half
a day,
No matter what the messenger he sent to her
might say,
If her children disappeared a minute, romping
at their play-
She'd fret.

## Don't Fret

If a storm came up and thundered, then she worried and she wondered—
You bet!
And if only once you blundered she would put it down a hundred
And fret.
She fretted and she stewed o'er the microbes in her food,
O'er the innocent bacillus in her system she would brood,
She would magnify her troubles to their greatest magnitude—
And fret.

Every day without a-trying she would come so near a-dying
She'd fret;
But she'd come to life a-crying, and go on with her sighing
And fret.
Till along one day came Death, and he took away her breath—
Having nothing left to fret with was the reason for her death.
So they nailed her in her coffin, and the stone above her saith,
"Don't fret."



## James Whitcomb Riley

(WETHOUT ARY APOLOGY)

I GOT to thinkin' of him—as sometimes a feller will—
An' the night he give a lecture to the folks in Shelbyville,
An' we set up 'til daylight, as them lecterers sometimes do—
A-talkin' of a hundred things that mightn't int'rest you;

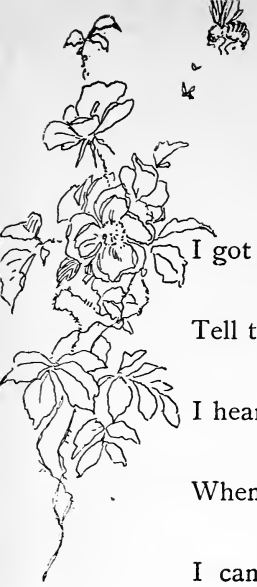
## James Whitcomb Riley

I mind the things he rattled off, that night, in boyish glee,
Recitations he recited to an audience of me;
How I laughed ontil the landlord come an' ast us to be still—
So I got to thinkin' of him, an' that night at Shelbyville.

Then he'd kindo' quit his nonsense, an' we'd settle down a spell,
Tell Jim 'ud turn upon me an' begin agin—"D'ev tell
'Bout the time I went to Franklin fer the Baptist college folks?"
An' I'd stretch my mouth acrost my face all ready fer the jokes;
But he'd branch off in a story 'bout the "Merry Workers" band,
Thet, onless you knowed the "Workers," you c'd hardly understand;

I c'd hear myself a swallerin', the room 'ud
seem so still—
So I got to thinkin' of him, an' that night at
Shelbyville.

I got to thinkin' of him—like 'twas jest a year
ago—
Fer time, that flies so fast in dreams, in alma-
nacs is slow;
He was workin' like a beaver, lectur'n here and
lectur'n' there,
An' a writin' on the railroad cars, in taverns—
ever'where—
Printin' poems in the papers, speakin' pieces at
the fairs—
An' him an' me a travelin' now an' then around
in pairs;
An' he seemed to think 'at he was no account
at all—but still
I got to thinkin' of him, an' that night at Shel-
byville.

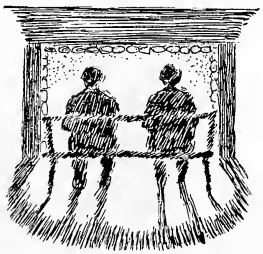


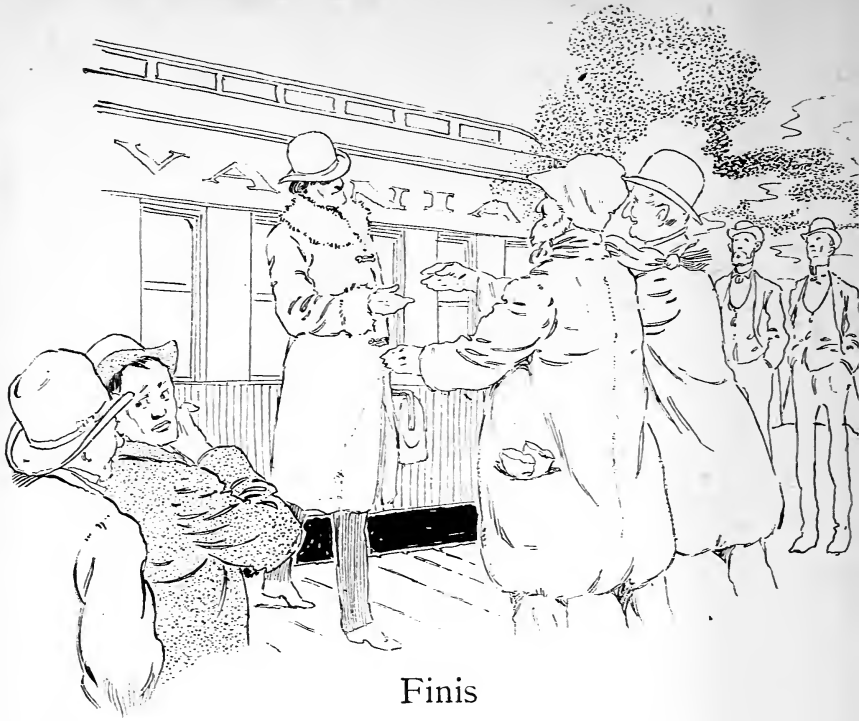


I got to thinkin' of him an' the happy "Days Gone By,"
Tell the sweet "Old Fashioned Roses" seemed to bloom agin—an' die;
I hear him talk agin about "My Bride that Is to Be,"
When he come to "Griggsby Station" jest to have a night with me;
I can see him settin' down agin to give the "Prince" a rock,
When "The Frost was on the Pumpkin and the Fodder in the Shock;"
An' I hear a laughin' voice I loved, with music in its trill—
So I got to thinkin' of him an' that night at Shelbyville.

An' I set an' wonder, sometimes, if I know jest what it means,
When I see 'em print his poetry in all the magazines;

An' I see him on the platform with the James and Howells set,
An' hear the people sayin' "He's the best one of 'em yet!"
An' I keep a winkin' back the tears that make my fool eyes shine,
Fer I couldn't feel no prouder ef he'd ben a boy of mine;
Fer he's jest the same old Riley, an' he'll be the same Jim still—
'At he was the night 'at him an' me set up at Shelbyville!





## Finis

WHAT time the winter sun is low,
When floods are high and trains are slow,
With joy each glad committee-man
The lecturer's half-guessed features scan.

For joy sets all their hearts a-flame;
They're glad he's come; he's glad he came;
It makes a waiting audience glum
To be informed—"He didn't come."



RD - 22

## Finis

And when, the dreary lecture o'er,
They settle down for chat once more,
First from their questioning lips he'll hear—
"And now, where do you go from here?"

So much depends on that, you know,
Whether to club or bed he'll go;
Their plans depend on—so they say—
How far his next place is away.

The new born friendships, pleasant chat,
Song, jest and story, and all that
Are long or short, as may appear
His answer—"Where d'ye go from here?"

"Where do you go from here, good friend?
When does our meeting have an end?
Hail and farewell! Your love is dear—
But say, Where do you go from here?"

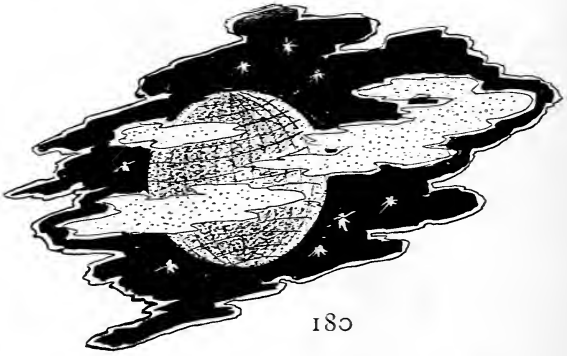
"Say, when the next place greets you fair,
Will you hear our voices calling there?
Will you think of us, be it far or near,
In the place you're going to from here?"

## Finis

And so, some day, when the sun is low,
And the trains of Time, as the schedules go,
Are slowing up to the station gate,
And the clock hands point to the hour of Fate;

When the scents of the evening damps arise
And the stars come out in the tranquil skies,
When the engine bell rings soft and slow
And the trainmen silently come and go;

When the jest and laughter that lived with him
Are hushed in the station lights so dim,
They will bend to whisper—"The end is near—
I wonder, where does he go from here?"



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